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A catechism on skirmishing and outpost duty

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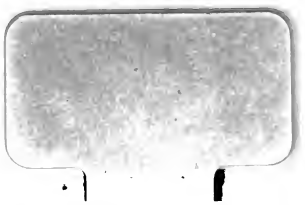

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A

CATECHISM

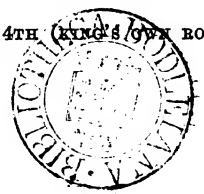
ON

SKIRMISHING AND OUTPOST DUTY.

BY

COLONEL W. G. CAMERON, C.B.,

COMMANDING 1ST BATTALION 4TH (KING'S OWN ROYAL) REGIMENT.



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PREFACE.

THIS Catechism on Skirmishing and Outpost duties was prepared by me for the use of my own Battalion at our frequent examinations of officers, non-commissioned officers, and men, in these and other subjects, and as the best means of ensuring a thorough theoretical knowledge, on the part of all ranks, preparatory to subsequent practice, when suitable ground could be obtained.

As the work may possibly be useful to others—especially to young officers preparing for promotion—I have been induced to offer it for general circulation.

From a tolerably long experience as permanent President of an Examination Board at Aldershot, and in the Southern District, on candidates for promotion, I think I may affirm that there is nothing in the following pages at variance with our "Field Exercise," to many of the general rules in which, only a rather more extended application has been given.

W. G. CAMERON,
Colonel, Commanding 1st Battalion 4th
(King's Own Royal) Regiment.

Gibraltar, 1876.

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SKIRMISHING.

N.B.—Words given by the Instructor of the drill are in CAPITAL LETTERS; those given by the Captain or Section-commanders, in *italics*.

FIELD EXERCISE. PART I.—THE SQUAD.

Q. 1.—What is the object of moving in extended order?

A.—To admit of the enemy's fire passing harmlessly through the intervals,—to enable each individual soldier to move with ease, and take advantage of cover when engaged with the enemy, and thus inflict the greatest loss on him with the least amount of danger and exposure to himself,—to shake and damage the enemy as much as possible, and enable the reserves to come up in comparative safety and complete his defeat.

Q. 2.—What has the recruit to be instructed in and accustomed to, in order to teach him how to use cover and avoid unnecessary exposure?

A.—How to avail himself of the slightest inequality of ground or smallest patch of cover —running or creeping up to, or falling back on such cover, when firing advancing or retiring, without unnecessary exposure. He must also be accustomed to throw himself flat on the ground, and rise again with the greatest agility and rapidity.[1]

[1] This is not so easy as it reads, but requires a good deal of practice. It is of the greatest importance, as *general* clumsiness or delay in this respect, when skirmishers are at close quarters with the enemy, would (even if not entailing defeat) be attended with great and unnecessary loss of life.

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Q. 3.—What has at the same time to be impressed on the recruit, when acting with a line of skirmishers?

A.—That he must keep his interval[2] and the general alignment, as much as possible—only taking advantage of cover in his immediate front and rear.

[2] To ensure this, however, don't teach the recruit to be always nervously watching the next directing file, for fear of losing his distance for a moment.

This practice (too often the habit of drill serjeants) only leads to the very thing to be avoided, when it comes to skirmishing on broken ground.

One man closing unnecessarily, causes the men on the outer flank to do the same; then they have to ease off and get forward, and the men sway uncertainly hither and thither.

On the contrary, —especially when advancing in short rushes,—the recruit should be taught to advance very much on the same principle as in 'marching with intervals' (Part I. Sec. 10, last paras.), *viz.*: taking a point to his front and advancing on it. He will see after a step or two if he is out in his reckoning, and will easily rectify his mistake. But by drilling recruits as first mentioned you teach them to be always looking at their neighbours instead of at the enemy, and thus check their proper freedom of action and rapidity of movement.

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Q. 4.—Why?

A.—Because, otherwise, the skirmishers get *clubbed* and crowded, are in each other's way when firing, and are exposed to heavier losses from the enemy's artillery.

Q. 5.—What should be impressed upon recruits and young soldiers, as regards the danger to be apprehended from artillery fire?[3]

A.—That they need have little or no fear of artillery, when they are in extended order and do not crowd; but, on the contrary, can always capture guns, if unsupported by infantry.

[3] It is considered of the utmost importance in well-trained armies to impress the recruit with certain useful doctrines—to make him self-possessed and less liable to panic.

Q. 6.—What other necessary maxims should be impressed on all recruits?

A.—That they have nothing to fear from cavalry, which can easily be beaten back. That, if attacked by infantry, they must remain perfectly steady, and keep up the fire till the enemy is close to the muzzles of their rifles. That, whether attacking or defending, he who turns his back on the breechloader is lost.

Q. 7.—How are recruits best taught skirmishing, when they have made sufficient progress in the mere drill?

A.—By opposing two squads of recruits at 500 or 600 yards apart and ordering them to attack each other, moving first in quick time, and, as they get nearer, in double time. The "Halt" is sounded every 30 or 40 paces, when suitable positions are reached, and the men are allowed a few seconds to get under cover within 5 or 10 paces from where they are halted.

When all have placed themselves, the instructors of each squad go round—noting every

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man's position with reference to the opposing party, pointing out their mistakes to them and, if necessary, taking their names.

A 1st, 2nd, and 3rd class will be established in skirmishing, as in ordinary drill; and recruits will not be dismissed till they are in the 1st class, from which they may be disrated for ignorance or inattention.

Q. 8.—How do skirmishers stand at the halt, if not ordered to kneel or lie down; and how do they proceed when a new movement is ordered?

A.—They stand at ease; on the last executive word they come to attention of their own accord, and proceed with the ordered movement.

Q. 9.—When skirmishers are in movement and the "Halt" sounds, or is ordered, what do they do?

A.—They halt (or halt and front), and stand, kneel, or lie down, as ordered, taking advantage of any cover.

Q. 10.—In extending, who are responsible for direction, and who regulate the intervals?

A.—The front-rank men are responsible for direction: the rear-rank men regulate the intervals.

FROM THE RIGHT (LEFT, CENTRE, *or* NO. —— FILE),—PACES, EXTEND.

Q. 11.—How does a party extend from the halt?

A.—On the word of command the front-rank man of the named file will stand, kneel, or lie down, as ordered.

[Extensions at the halt should take place under cover, or out of reach of the enemy's fire.]

The remainder will turn outwards, advance arms, and step off in quick time:—the rear-rank man of the named file will continue moving to the flank until he divides the ordered interval

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between his front-rank man and the front-rank man on his outer flank, when he will also halt and front in the alignment.

As each file gains the ordered interval, the rear-rank man will tap the front-rank man, who will at once halt and front, and the rear-rank man will move up into the alignment of the front rank on gaining his proper interval, as already described.

Q. 12.—In an extension from a central file, where does the rear-rank man go?

A.—To the left.

Q. 13.—What does the front-rank man of the next file on the right do?

A.—He only moves to half the named interval on the right.

Q. 14.—If it is desired to extend in a direction different from the present front, what is done?

A.—The party is wheeled up into the new direction and the extension then proceeds in the usual manner, the front-rank man of the outer, or leading, file getting a point to march on.

FROM THE RIGHT (LEFT, CENTRE, *or* NO. —— FILE), IN DOUBLE TIME, — PACES, EXTEND.

Q. 15.—If required to extend from the halt in double time, how would this be done?

A.—As in quick time, in all else but the step—except that the outer (or leading) file moves off at a lengthened pace till the files are sufficiently loosened to double with freedom.

The party may also be ordered to form fours towards the required direction, and then extend.

If extending under a very heavy fire and lying down, the outer file rises quickly, turns outwards at the same time, and runs off in the required direction, followed by the other files in

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succession at the named interval; the officer in command giving a signal to the leading file when to stop, and front and lie down in the alignment.

This method of extending would also be adopted if a party in close order under cover had to quit such cover, and extend to a flank (or outwards) under fire of the enemy.

Q. 16.—How is an extension on the march executed?

A.—The front-rank man of the file from which the extension is made continues to advance in *proper* quick time,[4] the others making a half turn outwards and breaking into double time.

[4] The quick time of skirmishers generally degenerates into a sort of slow time; this must be avoided in training the recruit.

As each man gets his interval, he turns into the alignment and breaks into quick time.

If the party is advancing at the double, the front-rank man of the file from which the extension is made continues the double, and the other men break into a run.

Q. 17.—When should an extension on the march commence?

A.—So as to complete the extension by the time the party is under effective fire of the enemy.

Q. 18.—What should the men extending be cautioned to be very particular about?

A.—To make a complete half turn, as otherwise they must necessarily overshoot the alignment.[5]

[5] The next man to the directing file gets beyond him and at once changes the alignment, the others coming up in succession doing the same. Better to make rather more than a half turn than less.

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TO —— PACES FROM THE ——, EXTEND.

Q. 19.—If it is required to increase the intervals of a line of skirmishers?

A.—The word of command is given, and the men open out from the named flank or file, as described in extending from close order.

Q. 20.—When should any dressing or want of proper interval between files be corrected, after an extension from the halt?

A.—Not till the skirmishers are in motion, but the mistakes should be previously pointed out by the Instructor, though the men are not allowed to move.

ON THE RIGHT (LEFT, CENTRE, *or* NO. —— FILE), CLOSE (OR, IN DOUBLE TIME, CLOSE).

Q. 21.—How do skirmishers close from the halt?

A.—The front-rank man of the named file will rise and stand at ease. The remainder will rise, turn towards him, and close in quick time, or at the double if specially ordered. The file on which the skirmishers close may be turned in any direction in which it is intended to form.

Q. 22.—How do skirmishers close on the march?

A.—The front-rank man of the named file continues to move on in quick time, and the remainder make a half turn towards him and close in double time, turning to the front and resuming the quick time when in their places. If retiring, they will close in a similar manner, rear rank leading.

Q. 23.—When should closing be avoided in action?

A.—When there is no cover, and the men are under fire.

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RIGHT (*or* LEFT) INCLINE.

Q. 24.—How do skirmishers move to a flank?

A.—On the word or bugle-sound, they make a half turn and move to the flank indicated, until ordered to advance in the original direction. If the incline is again ordered, they move direct to the named flank, making another half turn.

RIGHT (*or* LEFT) WHEEL. FORWARD (*or* HALT).

Q. 25.—How do skirmishers change front or direction?

A.—If on the move, by gradually wheeling in the new direction, the outer file regulating, and all taking care to keep their intervals.

On the word FORWARD, or HALT, they will advance, or halt in the new direction.

CHANGE FRONT TO THE RIGHT (*or* LEFT) ON THE RIGHT (*or* LEFT) FILE, or —— FILE. DOUBLE.

Q. 26.—If at the halt, and the change of front is to be executed by file formation, how is it done?

A.—The Instructor, having given the caution, will place the men of the named file or files (if two are taken as a base) in the new direction, and on the word DOUBLE, the remainder will move by the shortest way to their places in the new alignment,—those that double forward making a half turn inwards, and those that are thrown back a three-quarter turn inwards.

Q. 27.—How if the skirmishers are on the march?

A.—The whole will move steadily forward till the word DOUBLE, when the named file will be placed rapidly in the required direction, and the remainder will proceed as before.

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FIELD EXERCISE. PART II.—THE COMPANY.

Q. 28.—On the caution THE COMPANY WILL SKIRMISH, what takes place?

A.—The officers return their swords, and they and the markers take post as follows:

The captain will be six paces in rear of the centre; the guides, three paces in rear of the outer sections, and the markers three paces in rear of the inner sections.

During the extension (as before described), the guides and markers will see that the men take their proper intervals and preserve the general alignment, and that the outer file leads in the proper direction.

Q. 29.—When the extension is completed, what do the captain, guides, and markers do?

A.—They place themselves in the best positions to superintend,—the captain from 20 to 30 paces in rear of the centre, the guides and markers from 6 to 10 paces in rear of their respective sections, of which they have sole charge under the general superintendence of the captain.

Skirmish by Sections, at —— paces interval. From the Right (or *Left*) or *—— paces, Extend. From the Right* (*Left, Centre,* or *No. —— File*) *of —— Section, —— paces, Extend.*

Q. 30.—What is done when the company is ordered to extend by sections?

A.—The captain gives the annexed words.

The men of the first section to extend will extend at once.

The other sections move on and extend in succession from their inner flanks by order of their respective commanders, when they have

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got their section interval from the next section preceding them in the extension.

Q. 31.—What bugle-sounds will denote the right, centre, and left of the skirmishers?

A.—One G the right, two G's the centre, three G's the left.

Q. 32.—How are they applied to the "Incline," "Close," "Extend," and "Wheel?"

A.—Incline to Right, Centre, or Left.

Close on	do.	do.	do.
Extend from	do.	do.	do.
Wheel to the	do.		do.

Q. 33.—When do the men move, on the bugle sounding?

A.—When the last note has been sounded, not before.

Q. 34.—When the "Fire" is combined with any other call, when is it sounded?

A.—Always last; as if not and the firing has commenced, the other call might not be heard.

Q. 35.—When the "Halt" sounds, what takes place?

A.—All remain steady where they are; except that, if firing, the skirmishers who have dropped behind run up to those in front. The "Halt" does not annul the firing.

Q. 36.—What does the "Alert" imply, and what takes place when it is sounded?

A.—It implies sudden danger, and the men in movement at once halt and wait for orders.

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Q. 37.—What is done on the "Cease Fire" sounding, when at the halt?

A.—The men remain steady in whatever position they may be.[6]

[6] For drill purposes, all cease firing and remain in the position they are in, either awaiting orders, or for the purpose of enabling the General, or other commander, or his umpires, to note mistakes or decide between contending parties;—but, when engaged with a real enemy, the officers must convince themselves that the "Cease Fire" emanates from the General and applies to the whole force. It is a safe rule that, although the men remain in position, they may fire on any enemy that is firing at them or retreating within easy range. At the Alma, on the "Cease Fire" sounding somewhere in the neighbourhood, my regiment ceased firing — though the Russians were retreating in large masses before them and were being followed by our artillery. We lost an opportunity of inflicting very heavy losses on them.

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Q. 38.—What are the general rules regarding firing?

A.—That it is permissive—not obligatory, and that the men should be taught at drill always to aim at precise objects with the same deliberation as when skirmishing at musketry practice, as the habit of doing so sharpens the sight. It is also to be impressed on them that they should only fire when there is nothing to obscure the vision, and they have a reasonable chance of hitting. Useless firing is not only a waste of ammunition, but it gives the enemy, who is thus harmlessly fired at, confidence in himself and a contempt for the troops opposed to him.

Rapid firing from the whole of the skirmishers is reserved for close quarters, when those whose pouches are well supplied and who can fire the quickest and *steadiest* will win the day.

Any officer, or non-commissioned officer, who cannot keep the fire of his men under control fails altogether in the most important duty of his office.

Q. 39.—Do skirmishers firing at the halt shut down the flap of the back-sight after every shot?

A.—No, they do not shut it down till ordered to advance or retire.

Q. 40.—On the general word "Fire," or on the bugle sounding the "Fire," how is it acted on by skirmishers at the halt?

A.—If the simple order to fire is given or sounded, the section-leaders order such men as

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they think necessary to fire according to the number of shots required. Marksmen, or first-class shots, should be selected to fire at the long distances.

Q. 41.—If the captain wants to control the fire himself at first, what does he order?

A.—So many shots per section, or all marksmen to fire, or marksmen and first-class shots, or all hands to fire, as circumstances may require.

Q. 42.—How do skirmishers fire advancing?

A.—When not under effective fire of hostile infantry, and there is no necessity of pushing forward or quickly seizing any desirable position, the skirmishers may advance in quick time, occasionally making a temporary halt and kneeling down for a few shots if masses of the enemy's infantry or cavalry, which can be fired at with effect, present themselves in the distance.

Q. 43.—How do skirmishers advance firing, when under effective fire of the enemy's skirmishers or line?[7]

A.—By successive rushes of the whole line of skirmishers at the double or run.

2ndly. By named files or men selected to fire rushing forward and firing, followed by the remainder.

3rdly. By rushes of alternate ranks.

4thly. By alternate sections or half-companies.

[7] The following Questions have reference only to firing advancing under effective fire of enemy's infantry (viz., at from 500 yards and under), and not, as in the preceding Questions, to distant firing as described in the *Field Exercise*, Part II., S. 21.

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Q. 44.—How do skirmishers fire advancing, in the first instance?

A.—It is presumed they are lying down or under cover and firing.

The captain (having given the direction of attack to a central file in front of him) orders, by word of command or signal, a general advance; and the men leave their cover, or spring up from their lying position on the ground with the greatest alacrity, and rush forward in a general line, taking care not to crowd.[8]

(The slightest delay in springing up, or getting under cover, or lying down, may, and probably at close quarters will, cost a man his life.)

The captain, when he thinks they have gone far enough, or finds a good position, orders the "Halt," when every man instantly throws himself flat on the ground, or gets under cover *in front of him* and commences firing—not necessarily straight to his front,[9] where a single skirmisher may be opposed to him, but at those spots in the nearest portion of the enemy's skirmishers where they are most crowded or exposed.

Raking shots, wherever the opportunity offers, will do more damage than where every man fires straight to his front.

Wherever sections or small parties can get good cover, and perhaps a flanking fire on the enemy, by running a little further after the "Halt" is ordered, they may do so—but they must not cross the fire of their comrades.

In taking advantage of cover, the men must take care that they can use their arms freely,

[8] The *Field Ex.*, page 94, directs that "when any *large* object, affording *considerable* shelter, *comes in their way* several files may run up behind it." But, noting the parts I have underlined, this in no way countenances a practice (often seen) of individual skirmishers inclining right and left towards cover—losing their places and alignment—crowding, and causing disorder. When a party converges on some such shelter as described, it is for a particular object and by direction of an officer or n. c. section-leader.

The rule for a skirmisher is—seek cover straight to the front and, if there be none, throw yourself down flat on the ground in the alignment, leaving those who are under cover to do the firing, if yours is not wanted.

[9] The firing straight to his front used to be so firmly impressed on the soldier, that at the battle of the Alma I remarked the men of my company firing at single skirmishers in front and allowing large co-

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lumns of the enemy in other directions —but within short range — to retire unmolested, when every shot would have told; and it was with much difficulty, and after considerable delay, that I got the men to direct their fire on these masses of the enemy.

It is of the greatest importance in the fire tactics of a line of skirmishers, that the fire should be concentrated on such points of the enemy's line as it is intended to storm, and that the individual skirmishers should be instructed to fire at the enemy where most exposed or crowded.

that their further advance is not impeded, and that they have a clear view of the enemy.

When the captain has given his men breathing time, the signal to advance is again given, and away they go as before, bearing in mind that no man stands under fire a second longer than is absolutely necessary.[10]

[10] It is necessary to observe here, with regard to these rushes, that a brisk, but accurate fire should be directed on the enemy just before a rush is made, in order to silence his fire, and prevent his taking instant advantage of the moment the men leave their cover or get up to run forward.

A certain proportion of the men should, however, always be loaded when the rush is made, to be ready to open fire the instant they halt, and thereby protect many men who may not have secured their cover or laid down.

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Q. 45.—How do skirmishers advance firing, in the second instance?

A.—The named files or men (marksmen, first-class shots, alternate files, &c. &c., according to the requirements of the case) rush forward [11] from 50 to 100 yards—throw themselves flat on the ground, or get under cover—and commence firing.

The senior guide will accompany and take charge of them.

If the company is skirmishing singly, a central file or man of those rushing forward will be named to direct on a given point:—if the company is acting in concert with other companies, the inner flank file or man nearest the company of direction will direct, keeping his distance from the next company. Where cover exists, such men or files as have cover in front of them should be chosen to advance.

When the advanced files or men have got into position and opened fire, [12] the remainder double up into line with them (but on no account beyond) and throw themselves flat on the ground, or get under cover, and take up the fire.

Other men or files will then advance in like manner—taking care, when in position, to keep down, as much as possible, the enemy's fire directed on the men coming up behind and who are exposed.

The men who are to advance should always load before so doing [13]—so as to be ready to fire directly they get into position.

[11] The men who remain in position having fired up to the last moment, as mentioned in the last note ([10])—and even during the rush, where the front is quite clear.

[12] In firing after these rushes, and especially at close quarters with the enemy, the men should not take their eyes off him to load—but do so without looking down. Recruits must be habituated to load quickly and with perfect ease, without looking at the breech of the rifle.

[13] This is important, especially at close quarters, where the men must be ready to fire the instant they get into a new position, and must not take their eyes off the enemy.

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Q. 46.—How do skirmishers advance, firing by alternate ranks?

In like manner—taking care not to pass through each other when coming up into the alignment.[14]

On very undulating ground, the rank remaining behind may sometimes fire over the heads of the rank advancing, and thus, by its fire, cover the advance—but this can only be done where the advancing rank is considerably below the elevation on which the rank in rear is posted.

Q. 47.—How do skirmishers advance and fire by sections?

A.—They may either advance by alternate sections, or the centre and flank sections may advance and fire alternately.[15]

In the first instance, on the words "*Advance and fire by alternate Sections, commencing with* 1 *and* 3 (or 2 *and* 4)," the named sections, under the direction of their commanders, who will be in rear of their respective pivot flanks, will rush forward, covered by the fire of the sections that remain behind,—take up a position from 30 to 50 yards in front,—and open fire.

On their thus opening fire, the other sections rush forward in their turn—the guides in rear of the pivot flanks giving a direction to the pivot files, beyond, and section interval clear of, the sections in front—so that the intervals are preserved, and the sections do not cross each other.

They advance 30 or 50 paces beyond those in

[14] The rank in rear, or alternate files, could not pass the firing line without great danger, especially as, with the present rapid firing, they would not be heard coming up—and the men in front would be in constant fear of comrades rushing past the muzzles of their rifles. Neither can they, when the latter have passed them, fire through the narrow intervals.

[15] This and the following methods of advancing firing by sections are of course to be adapted to the nature of the ground and object in view—such sections rushing forward as have cover in front, from which they can, by a cross fire, protect the advance of the other sections. Their individual movement is subordinate to, and regulated by, the general movement of the line of skirmishers, which has, above all things, to conform to the general direction of advance or attack, indicated by that portion of the line which has been warned to direct.

This in no way fetters individual enterprise, where a

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forward position, not held by the enemy, may be seized with advantage, or when his flank can be turned.

Officers must, however, be very careful not to expose their sections, half-companies, or companies, to enfilade or being cut off, or to weaken the line by breaking off proper connection with it.

front—the latter keeping down the enemy's fire as much as possible.

When they have thus secured a forward position, those sections that first advanced will again rush 30 or 50 yards in front of the others, in like manner. (*See* Pl. I., Fig. 1.)

Q. 48.—How do skirmishers advance firing by sections—flanks and centre alternately?

A.—On the words from the captain, "*Advance and fire, flanks and centre alternately*," the guides in charge of Nos. 1 and 4 sections order them to double or run to the front, 30 to 50 paces (inner files or men directing).

The centre sections (2 and 3) cover the advance with a brisk fire on the enemy.

When the flank sections are in position, the centre sections double or run 30 or 50 paces in advance of the flank sections, covered by their crossing fire; then the flank sections again advance 30 or 50 paces in advance of the centre, and so on.[16] (*See* Pl. I., Fig. 2.)

[16] This would be a capital method of advancing and firing on level ground, with a clear front, as there is nothing to impede the fire of those sections protecting the advance of the others. For drill purposes, it habituates the flanks to concentrate their fire.

It would also probably be the way the enemy's line would have to be stormed and broken through at certain points—the flanks pouring in a concentrated fire on the enemy in front of the centre, whilst the centre dashes forward to the attack.

Q. 49.—If you wish to turn the enemy's flank, when no detour is practicable, how would you advance and fire by sections?

A.—In echelon of sections from the right or left.

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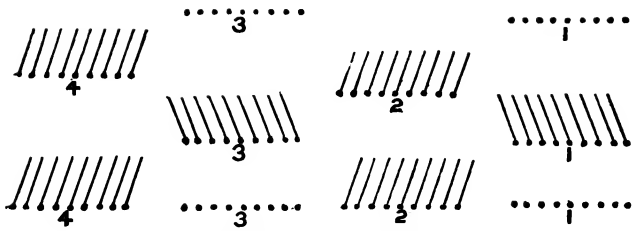
PLATE I.

FIG. 1.



Left of Right Half-company directing.

FIG. 2.

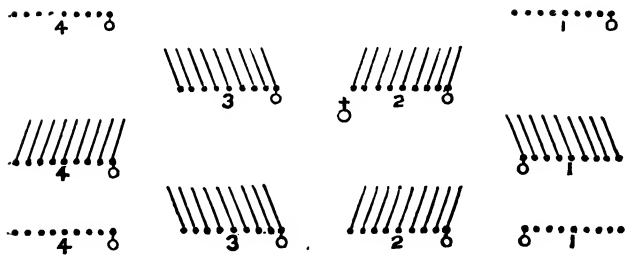


FIG. 3.

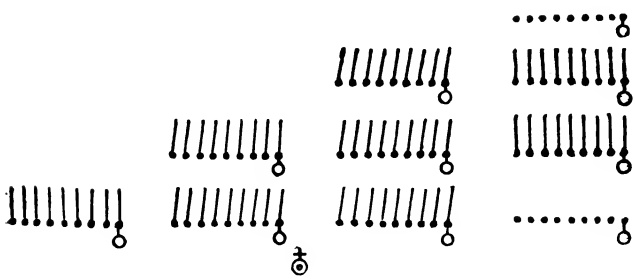


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PLATE II.

Fig. 1.

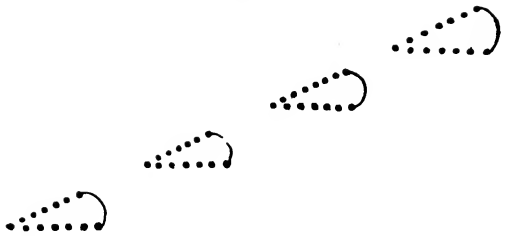


Fig. 2.

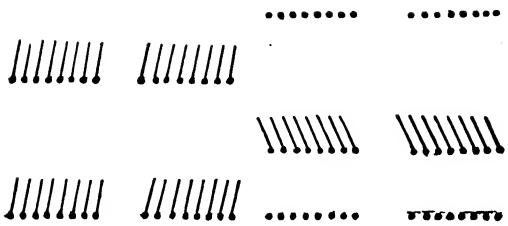
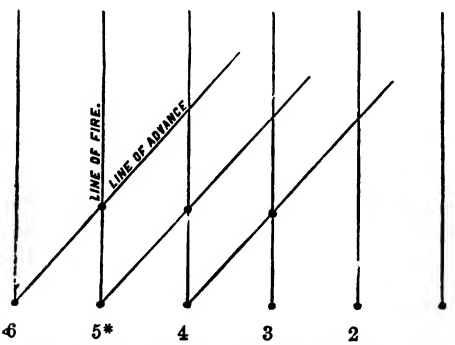


Fig. 3.



* 5 halts fronts to fire whilst 6 is inclining.

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Q. 50.—How is this done?

A.—On the word from the captain "*Advance and fire in echelon of Sections from the right* (or *left*)."

The right (or left) section advances from 20 to 30 paces, and opens fire, covered by the fire of the remainder of the company:—then the next section runs or doubles up to it, the other sections in rear still keeping up the fire on the enemy.

The right (or left) section then doubles forward again, covered by the fire of the next section, which afterwards follows as before;—the third section now makes a rush, after which the first section will again advance, when the echelon will be complete—the first section having made three rushes, the next two, and the third, one.[17]

[17] In all these different methods of skirmishing by sections, the same rules apply, of making use of cover, and avoiding exposure when rushing forward, as have been mentioned elsewhere.

Q. 51.—What can be done in this formation, if necessary, to turn an enemy's flank and get a raking or enfilading fire to bear on him?

A.—By wheeling each section on its inner flank, a change of front can be made at a small angle in a very short space of time. (*See* Pl. II., Fig. 1.)

Q. 52.—How would you advance firing by half-companies in skirmishing order?

A.—By alternate half-companies, in the same manner as by alternate sections, one-half of the company always covering with its fire the advance of the other. (*See* Pl. II., Fig. 2.)

Q. 53.—What are the advantages, and disadvantages, of skirmishing by sections?

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A.—The advantages are, that a portion of the line of skirmishers is always firing and covering the advance of the remainder; whereas, when otherwise advancing, the fire stops during the time the men are rushing forward, and the enemy can fire at them, while thus exposed, without any risk to himself.

Another advantage at practice is, that the section-commanders are accustomed to command and direct their sections.

The disadvantage is, that, in actual warfare, the sections, if not well directed by the guides, will run into or cross each other, and cause disorder in the line.

Q. 54.—When would you, therefore, begin to advance and fire by sections or half-companies?

A.—Not till near the enemy—say not beyond 400 yards—and then the rushes would perhaps be short ones.

Q. 55.—How do skirmishers retire firing in the ordinary manner, as described in the first part of Sec. 21, Part II. of the *Field Ex.?*

A.—The general line of skirmishers retires in quick time, following the main body whose retreat it is covering. Named men or files are ordered to halt, front, and fire; having delivered their fire, they turn about, and join the general line, which in the meantime has dropped other shots, who fire directly their front is clear of those first dropped, and then proceed in like manner—advantage being taken of every available position to make a stand, or, as is evidently intended in the book, "*a general stand.*"

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Q. 56.—To what sort of retreat would this method of skirmishing apply?

A.—To a hurried and continuous retreat after a general defeat, or to a rapid retreat for some considerable distance of some portion of the force engaged—the enemy pressing forward without halting, with great superiority of numbers.

Q. 57.—What are the disadvantages of this method of retiring firing?

A.—The line retiring in quick time is much exposed (except when protected by cover), and the men, who are being dropped every instant, have but time to take a hasty shot (generally standing, as we see on parade and at field days) before running back to overtake the general line.

The greater number of the skirmishers have their backs to the enemy, and the fire is being perpetually stopped while the men in front are clearing the front of those in rear.

It is in fact a hurried fire *while in movement*, which was found so dangerous to friend and so harmless to foe, as to be strongly discountenanced even at the commencement of the late war between France and Germany.

It might, however, be adapted to a retreat through brushwood, plantations, or very rough ground, through which a quick, continuous retreat is being made—where delay might cause loss of connection with supports and reserves, and where the enemy can only see you at close quarters and must follow very much in the same way. In short, when it cannot be said that you are exposed to a really effective fire on the part of the enemy.

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Q. 58.—How do skirmishers retire firing, when under effective fire of the enemy's infantry?

A.—The only effective way of checking the advance of a closely pursuing enemy, is to retire under cover or in rushes from one position to another, by alternate ranks, files, sections, half-companies, or companies—the supports relieving frequently (as described hereafter) when good opportunities offer, as the retreat of skirmishers, when closely pursued, is very fatiguing and harassing.

Retire by alternate ranks (or *files*), *commencing with front* (or *rear*) *rank*, or, *with right* (or *left*) *files.*

Q. 59.—Describe how this is done by alternate files or ranks?

A.—On the annexed word, the named rank (or files) are dropped, and at once lie down (or get under cover) and commence firing. The remainder retire under cover, or (should there be none) at the double or run, and take up a position from 50 to 100 yards in rear.

When seen to be posted by the officer in charge of the rank or files first dropped, his men deliver a parting, well-aimed shot, to check and disturb the enemy and silence his fire for the moment, and instantly double or run back through the second line and take up another position—the second line opening fire directly the front is clear, and then proceeding in like manner, under charge of the captain.

Q. 60.—How do skirmishers retire firing by sections, half-companies, or companies?

A.—In the same formations as described when advancing—according to circumstances and the nature of the ground; those sections, half-com-

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panies, or companies, which have cover available, protecting the retreat of the others.

The flanks and centre retiring alternately, if the ground is favourable, will be found the best plan.

Q. 61.—What great difference is there between advancing and retiring firing, as regards giving the direction?

A.—In advancing, the skirmishers take the initiative, and the supports and reserve follow their lead; but in retiring, the skirmishers must follow *them*—though the supports and reserve, on the other hand, must regulate their speed, in retiring, by that of the skirmishers when engaged, so as to be always ready to come to their assistance when necessary.

But the skirmishers, after the main body they are protecting has gained sufficient distance, must not delay their retreat so as to be too much separated from the latter.

Q. 62.—How do skirmishers fire when inclining, or moving direct to a flank, as laid down in the *Field Ex.*, Part II., Sec. 21, No. 4?

A.—Named men are ordered to fire, who will make a momentary halt, turn to the front, and fire.

Q. 63.—Is there any danger or disadvantage in so doing?

A.—Yes, as shown in Pl. II., Fig. 3, the line of advance of one man crosses the line of fire of his neighbour, when inclining, and therefore such fire is only practicable when the intervals are considerable.

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When moving direct to a flank, a man firing would have the next man following upon him before he delivered his shot, and the practical bility of such fire therefore also depends on the intervals.

In any case, such fire would be very hurried while the men were moving, and is probably not intended to be used excepting in exceptional circumstances,—certainly not when under effective fire of the enemy's infantry.

Q. 64.—In what circumstances are skirmishers (under fire) relieved by their supports?

A.—Only when the skirmishers are retiring.

Q. 65.—How is the relief executed?

A.—The supports will halt, front, and extend at the halt—not only out of reach of the fire of the enemy but, if possible, unseen by him, and a considerable distance (seldom under 300 yards) in rear of the skirmishers, in order to have ample time to extend and make all necessary arrangements to give the enemy a warm reception.

Every man will be lying down, or under cover.

The position taken up should, if possible, possess all the requirements for a good defence[18] —especially on the flanks.

The old skirmishers retire firing, obstinately contesting the ground in front of the enemy from one point to another, till within about 50 yards, when they run through the relieving line and halt (out of fire) by word of command, closing, if necessary, to form the new support. Directly its front is clear, the new line of

[18] It must not be forgotten that the enemy, in his advance, must be kept as long under fire as possible, and that, therefore, there should be at least from 300 to 400 yards of ground in front of the position, where he is fully exposed.

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skirmishers will open fire, and hold the ground till ordered by the captain to continue the retreat.

Q. 66.—May a line of skirmishers *not under fire* be relieved?

A.—Yes, at any time, in cases of over fatigue, or failure of ammunition. When this takes place, the support will advance, extending, if ordered, on the march and taking up the alignment held by the skirmishers, who will then retire and close by word of command, becoming the new support.[19]

[19] It is not quite clear whether, in the *Field Exercise*, a support is prohibited from thus relieving a line of skirmishers (maintaining an active defence) who occupy a ridge — elevated ground — or any plantation, or cover, from which they can retire and be replaced by a relieving party, without either being seen by the enemy or exposed to his fire. —Such a line is only *under fire*, where it *stands*.

Q. 67.—How is any part of a line of skirmishers reinforced by its support, or a portion of the support?

A.—If the party to reinforce is in close order, and the intermediate space between it and the skirmishers is under effective fire of the enemy, it must extend at the halt (under cover if possible), in quick or double time according to the emergency, and so as to correspond to the breadth of line of the skirmishers to be reinforced. The men then, on a signal from the commander, double forward, and join the line of skirmishers, dividing the intervals between them and opening fire.

Q. 68.—If the intermediate ground between the support and line of skirmishers is not under effective fire of the enemy, how does the former reinforce?

A.—It advances at once, extends on the march, and proceeds as before.

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Q. 69.—How would you reinforce (the whole of your support being in extended order) with a view to concentrating on some particular point in the skirmishing line, for purposes of attack?

A.—The section-commanders pass my orders to advance and close, or close to loose files; when all are prepared, I run forward in the direction selected, as described in the marginal note to *A.* 66, the men inclining gradually towards me, so as not to get into close order, or loose file formation, till we have reached, or nearly reached, the skirmishers.

But this is a difficult and dangerous operation under heavy fire on level and open ground, when the support is greatly extended; and the following alternative plan would be better—time permitting.

I give my orders to reinforce by successive sections or half-companies, following ——- section or half-company;[20] and the word is passed down the line. (Plate III.)

[20] The section or half-company immediately in rear of the point to be reinforced and from which the attack is to proceed, or the one most conveniently placed for that purpose.

When all are on the alert and ready, the named section or half-company, led by me or its commander (if so ordered), runs forward in extended order to the point to be reinforced, and the other half-company or sections will follow at intervals in rear;—thus dividing the attention of the enemy and rendering his fire less destructive,—besides having, for purposes of attack, several short, manageable lines of skirmishers following each other in good order (more or less contracted as may be advisable), and multiplying the chances of penetrating the enemy's skirmishers at the point selected.

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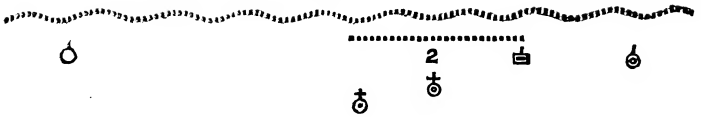
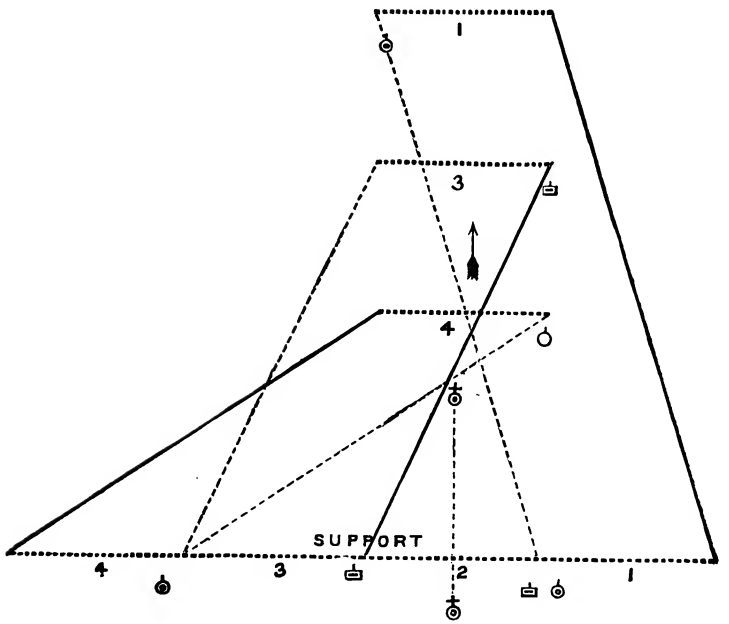
PLATE III.

Skirmishers.





Reinforce by successive Sections, No. 2 Section leading.

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Q. 70.—In reinforcing, what should be done as regards supply of ammunition?

A.—The support should, if there be time, have supplied itself from the ammunition cart with an extra packet or two of ammunition per man, to distribute amongst the skirmishers to be reinforced.

Q. 71.—If the line of skirmishers has to be prolonged to a flank without weakening the rest of the line, how is it done?

A.—The party to prolong the line will be extended in rear, and then ordered to move up on the flank of the skirmishers.

Q. 72.—When a captain brings up his company to relieve or reinforce, what have he and the section-commanders to say, as they approach the skirmishers?

A.—They will call out "To relieve" or "To reinforce," as the case may be; that the skirmishers may know how to act.

Q. 73.—On the bugle-sound "Close," or the word "*Close on Support,*" what takes place?

A.—The skirmishers run in independently on the support, clearing its front as soon as possible, to enable it to fire if necessary; and form six paces in rear of it.

Q. 74.—If attacked by cavalry in this position, what is done?

A.—The senior officer orders the rear company to turn about, and both companies to throw back their flanks, so as to form an oval.

Q. 75.—Should the skirmishers be attacked

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by cavalry before they can reach the support, what do they do?

A.—Form rallying squares.

Q. 76.—Should the "Extend" be ordered after the skirmishers have closed on the supports, what takes place?

A.—The old support will advance and extend from the centre, or such file as will cause it to occupy the original position, and the old skirmishers will form the new support.

If the former position cannot be resumed, the old support may extend at the halt, and the old skirmishers (constituting the new support) will retire to their proper position in rear.

Q. 77.—How does a line of skirmishers meet an attack of cavalry?

A.—Where such an attack is possible on suitable ground for cavalry, the skirmishers should at any moment be prepared to form to receive it; the officers previously taking note of the best positions on which to rally their men.

If the enemy's cavalry should be advancing from the front at a distance, and the intermediate ground affords him no cover, the skirmishers should remain steady and continue firing[21]: but should he approach dangerously near, or attack suddenly on a flank, or from a concealed position within easy attacking distance, the skirmishers will run to the best cover that time may permit, and place themselves in position according to its nature.

If there is no cover within reach, they may at once form rallying squares by half-companies, sections, or small groups, which can be moved in on each other as opportunity offers.

[21] Cavalry will frequently feign an attack on easily alarmed skirmishers, for the purpose of throwing them into squares and thereby making them a good mark for artillery fire.

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Q. 78.—How does the support proceed?

A.—It moves up at once (closing if at open files) into the best position to aid the skirmishers, and, if possible, opens fire to check the approaching cavalry. Should the cavalry still press upon them, the flanks will gradually fall back, so that the company will form an oval (two-deep) round the captain; or it may form company square.

Q. 79.—At what should the fire be directed?

A.—At the horses of the enemy's cavalry.

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FIELD EXERCISE. PART III.—THE BATTALION.

General Rules of Skirmishing.

Q. 80.—How are troops in extended order divided?

A.—Into three parts, Skirmishers, Supports, and Reserve.

Q. 81.—Are supports usually required in front of a line deployed, or of a line of columns at deploying interval?

A.—No, according to the *Field Exercise*—but this evidently means, if the line itself is at supporting distance and able to fulfil all the requirements of efficient support.

Q. 82.—When is a reserve needed?

A.—Only when a battalion is skirmishing alone, or at some distance from the force it covers.[22]

[22] This refers to a reserve from the battalion; — of course the main body furnishes such reserves as may be necessary.

Q. 83.—What is the relative strength of skirmishers, supports, and reserve?

A.—The supports should always be composed of numbers equal to the line of skirmishers—thus, every company extended should have a company supporting it.

The reserve should be equal to at least one-third of the whole force in extended order.

Q. 84.—If a single company is detached to skirmish at a distance, how is it divided?

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A.—Half the company extends, and half remains in support.

Q. 85.—What are the relative duties of skirmishers, supports, and reserves?

A.—Details are given elsewhere, but, speaking generally—

The Skirmishers.

The movements of skirmishers depend in a great measure on the movements of the enemy whom they are attacking, or whose advance they are opposing. They receive general instructions as to the object in view before being sent out, which they must endeavour to fulfil according to the circumstances of the case, making the best use of all opportunities that offer of carrying out the general idea and meeting the difficulties that arise.

They are to recollect that, once launched against the enemy and under his effective fire, superior mounted officers and their staff officers can no longer be galloping up with orders; and that the initiative and responsibility rest with the skirmishers, who have their supports to assist them, when necessary, and their battalion and brigade commanders watching them closely from striking distance, ready to follow up all advantages and taking good care that the enemy will not be allowed to overpower them.

Skirmishers should be aware beforehand what force in support they have to rely on, and where it is;[23] they will then know what they can undertake, without having any unnecessary fears of being left in the lurch, or hesitation in

[23] It is especially necessary when skirmishers are occupying woods, villages, &c., that they should know where the supports and reserves are.

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availing themselves of favourable opportunities of attack or defence.

Skirmishers covering the main body should always, when practicable, protect and overlap its flanks.

Supports.

It is the duty of the officer in command of supports to assist and support the skirmishers in every way, and the movements of both must therefore correspond.

The officer in command of a support acts on his own responsibility, without waiting for orders from his commanding-officer,[24] and must therefore keep a keen eye on the skirmishers; for which purpose his support (though itself under cover) must be in such a position as to enable him to command a good view of the line of skirmishers he is supporting, as well as to support any part of it. He should also be in such a position as to command a good view of the enemy in front and on either flank of the skirmishers he is supporting. He must at once comply with all demands for assistance on the part of the skirmishers; but does not wait for this when he sees the necessity of reinforcing, relieving, prolonging a flank, or meeting any movement of the enemy, of which perhaps he is the best judge, from the position he has chosen and the absence of that excitement and preoccupation of mind to which those actually engaged are exposed.

Supports should be as near the centre of their own skirmishers as the configuration of the ground may permit, and in echelon with each other, having due regard to cover.

[24] The opposite of this rule is but too frequently the case at manœuvres, where the supports are in the habit of waiting for orders from the commanding-officer 700 or 800 yards in rear of the skirmishers—who is quite unable to judge of their requirements, except in a general way from what he can see at a distance.

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A support, however, at either extremity of the line of skirmishers, should be so disposed as to meet any attempt of the enemy to turn the outer flank of the skirmishers it is supporting.

Reserve.

The reserve will be placed as nearly as possible in rear of the centre of the formation, so as to send relief to the skirmishing line and supply fresh supports when the old supports are seen to have joined the skirmishers.[25]

The commander of the reserve must be prepared to reinforce partly, or with his whole strength, for the purposes of attack, or to make arrangements to cover a retreat; and should be in such a position as to be able to see that part of the field of battle where his skirmishers are engaged, as also in the vicinity. He will keep a sharp look out on either flank of his skirmishers, to see that they are not being outflanked or cut off by an advance of the enemy in other parts of the field (unperceived by them), and will send orders if necessary. But he must be very certain and cautious before he interferes in any way with their independent action.

He must also have due regard to the protection of the main body.

Q. 86.—What are the relative distances between skirmishers, supports, and reserves?

A.—As a general rule, on a plain, the distance between supports and skirmishers is 300 yards; between supports and reserves, 500 yards; and between reserves and main body, 500 yards.

[25] It may also be advisable to state here that the commander of the reserve is responsible for the proper supply of additional ammunition from the cart which accompanies the reserve. He should therefore take every opportunity of completing the men who have been firing, with their proper complement of rounds, without waiting till they have exhausted what they started with. Such opportunities will always offer during an action.

He may also, if desirable, supply additional ammunition to skirmishers and supports before sending them out, which they can put into their trousers' pockets. In a close, or undulating country the cart can, when necessary, generally be safely sent to the supports.

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These distances become modified on ground where cover presents itself and the supports can approach to a less distance, from which they can better assist the skirmishers,—but, even then, regard must be had to the ground in rear, in case the skirmishers should be beaten back.

Q. 87.—With reference to the *Field Ex.*, Part III., para. 5, p. 208 (Time of Movements and Cover), in what time are movements executed under fire[26] and when not under fire?

A.—Under fire, in double time; when not under fire, in quick time.

[26] This evidently means effective fire of infantry, and has been fully entered into in Questions relating to *Field Exercise*, Part II.

Q. 88.—Does this apply to supports, as well as skirmishers?

A.—Yes: when the skirmishers make a rush under effective fire of the enemy, and the support has to follow under fire, it also makes a corresponding rush and lies down, or gets under cover.

Q. 89.—How does the reserve move in presence of cavalry, and when under artillery fire?

A.—The reserve should take advantage of cover to screen its movements from the enemy, and with due regard to its duties, as explained in A. to Q. 85. In presence of cavalry it should be in column; but when exposed to artillery fire, in line.

Q. 90.—On an instruction parade, and where there is variety of ground, what should the commanding-officer do, preparatory to moving?

A.—He will explain to the battalion the nature and advantages of the ground for attack

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and defence, and the general object he has in view. For purposes of good practical instruction, and to create a spirit of emulation amongst officers and men, one half of the battalion should be manœuvred against the other half, under their respective field-officers; the commanding-officer being careful to explain the general idea and the conditions as to limitation of ground, and to see that nothing is attempted which could not be done in actual war, either as regards the nature of the movement or the mode of its execution.

He should frequently sound the "Cease Fire," note the mistakes (if any) on either side, and see what advantage has been taken of them, before allowing the action to proceed. Any portion of either party attempting to storm a part of the other's position will, after making the necessary demonstration, halt within 50 yards, order arms, and stand at ease; the force immediately opposed doing the same, and waiting for the commanding-officer's decision. When the commanding-officer is satisfied that no useful purpose is to be gained by prolonging the engagement, and that everything is ripe for a decision, he will order the "Cease Fire" to be sounded, and proceed down the line between the contending parties, calling out in rotation the officers from both sides of the companies opposed to each other, and pointing out the advantages and defects in their relative positions.[27]

He will then assemble the battalion, address such remarks to the men as may concern them, and then call out the officers and acquaint them

[27] We have frequently had such practices in extended order, and I have found them more useful than anything else, from the great interest evinced by both officers and men. At the same time I have also found that to come to the ground without officers and men being previously well-instructed theoretically in the principles of skirmishing, is a most tedious proceeding and next to useless.

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with his decision as to which side has been successful; adding any observations he may have to make of an instructive nature, regarding the movements generally or individually on either side.

Q. 91.—What part of the line of skirmishers of a battalion, acting singly, usually gives the direction?

A.—The centre.

Q. 92.—What part, if several battalions are skirmishing?

A.—The officer commanding the line will name the directing company or battalion (skirmishing), and the officers commanding other companies will keep their men properly extended from, and aligned upon it.

Q. 93.—When moving to a flank obliquely or direct, who directs, and for how long?

A.—The leading man, but only during the movement, the duty of directing being resumed (on the line again advancing) by that part originally leading.

Q. 94.—When a change of front is made, who directs, and for how long?

A.—The file on which the change of front is made, but only during the movement.

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Q. 95.—When skirmishers become mixed, or are in disorder, who directs?

A.—The officer commanding may order any named man to direct, and the others will at once align themselves with him, without regard to their general places; the officers and N.C. officers will take charge of proper portions of the line and the whole will move and act by the new centre.[28]

[28] This evidently refers, in the *Field Exercise*, to a change of men in the directing company, or portion of the line which has been directing; not to a change from one part of the line to another, unless in a case of great disorder, where all direction has been lost and the directing company has disappeared.

But, otherwise, the original company, or battalion, directing will not be changed during an attack, whether reinforced or not, unless a *change of plan* has been made which renders it necessary.

The most difficult thing (and the subject of so much controversy) in an attack of skirmishers, is to preserve order when once they have got out of reach of superior control; and a good mutual understanding between the company commanders, and conformity to the movements of the officer who has been chosen to direct, are of the utmost importance.

All changes, therefore, in such circumstances are dangerous in the extreme.

A company, or battalion, reinforced by another should (under the senior officer) move with but little less regularity than before; but this is only to be attained by constant practice and by a uniformity of system between battalions. Constantly reinforce your skirmishers on parade, and then put them through all the skirmishing movements till they work as regularly as before.

At the Alma, the brigade skirmishing in front of the one I belonged to, must have been in considerable confusion, for one of the commanding-officers was afterwards riding in rear of my company when attacking the 32-gun redoubt—apparently without a regiment, and employed in cheering and encouraging our men, who stood in no need of it.

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Q. 96.—How are arms carried in extended order?

A.—Reserves and supports move at the "Trail" when unloaded; when loaded, at the "Slope." The skirmishers move at the "Trail," whether loaded or unloaded.

Q. 97.—Where are the officers of the supports and reserve posted?

A.—The officer in command of a support is always in front, watching the skirmishers, as described in A. to Q. 85, and may be some distance in front for that purpose.

If the support moves up to assist the skirmishers, he leads it into the alignment.

The officers, &c. &c. of a reserve, when in quarter column, will always take post as in column by the left.

Q. 98.—What are the duties of the officers and section-commanders in the skirmishing line, when engaged with an enemy?

A.—To keep their men well in hand and warn them that in all circumstances, even when closely engaged with the enemy, they must be always attentive to the orders of their captain and section-leaders.

They must keep the fire of their men under control, direct them where to fire so as to be most effective, and watch their shots to see that they are using the proper sights and, while they are saving of their ammunition, on the other hand take advantage of all occasions when a rapid and powerful fire is necessary.

The officers must never lose sight of the

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position of the enemy and the nature of the intermediate ground, in order (without unnecessary exposure) to get nearer to him with the line of skirmishers, or part of it, or to make a dash at a weak, or not sufficiently defended part of his position. They must also look about for opportunities of flank attacks on the enemy, or portions of his position, and of aiding the advance of other parts of their own line, or of concentrating the fire on certain points, preparatory to charging. But they must never lose their proper connection with the general line, or undertake anything which is not in conformity with the general object in view.

They will spare their men from all unnecessary fatigue and hurry—only allowing them to run, or double, when exposed to destructive fire, or when required to do so for some special purpose.

Q. 99.—Are skirmishing movements generally regulated by word of command, or by bugle-sound?

A.—By word of command. Commands must be repeated by the captains and every supernumerary belonging to the line of skirmishers.

Q. 100.—What are the instructions regarding bugle-sounds?

A.—That they may occasionally be necessary substitutes for the voice—but as they are liable to be misunderstood, and may reveal intended movements to the enemy, they are seldom to be used except for purposes of drill. The commanding-officer's bugle will generally be found

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sufficient; repeated sounds only create confusion, and delay.

Q. 101.—What call should every regiment have?

A.—A well-marked and simple regimental call.

Q. 102.—To whom do bugle-sounds apply?

A.—Only to the men extended. Supports and reserves invariably move by word of their own commanders.

THE BATTALION WILL SKIRMISH (BY SECTIONS).

Q. 103.—How does a battalion extend from quarter column?

A.—On the caution to skirmish, the battalion will come to "attention," guides will fall to the rear, swords will be returned.

A company, or part of one, will be named to direct on a certain distant point, and the intervals between files should be given (also between sections, if skirmishing in that order) according to the extent of line the commanding officer wishes to take up. A guide will be in rear of, and direct the directing file.

NO. 1, WILL EXTEND —— PACES FROM THE RIGHT (LEFT, CENTRE, *or* NO. —— FILE).

As each company is named, the captain will move it out and extend it as ordered, in the following manner:—

"*No.* 1. *Quick March. From the Centre* (*Right* or *Left*, or *No.*—*file*), —*paces, Extend.*"

NO. 2, PROLONG THE LINE TO THE RIGHT (*or* LEFT), or NOS. 2 AND 3, PROLONG TO THE RIGHT AND LEFT.

"*No.* 2. *Fours, Right* (or *Left*). *Double March,*" and when on the flank of No. 1 company, which it is intended to prolong, "*From the Right* (or *Left*), *Extend.*"

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Nos. ——, ——, RIGHT (CENTRE, *or* LEFT) SUPPORTS.

No. 3 company, if required, moves out in like manner. Each company will continue the advance, when extended, until ordered to halt, unless otherwise directed.

Supports will move to the rear of the centre of the skirmishing companies they are to support, merely advancing if already in rear; the other supports moving to the right or left in fours.

Q. 104.—If a quarter column is ordered to extend to the right or left, or in any direction other than the present front, what is done?

A.—The column is wheeled to the right or left, or in the new direction, and then proceeds as above.

Q. 105.—How does a battalion extend from line?

A.—The companies to skirmish and support will be named, as in quarter column, and captains move their companies as follows:—

"*No.* 1. *Quick March. From the Right* (or *Left*, or *No.* — *File*), —— *paces, Extend.*"

"*No.* 2 (if No. 1 extends from the left, and its front is clear) *Quick March. From the Right,* —— *paces, Extend,*" or (if No. 1 extends from the right, or centre, across its front) "*Fours, Left. Double March,*" and, as soon as the left of No. 1 is reached, "*From the Right,* —— *paces, Extend.*"

No. 3, if required to skirmish, moves in the same manner as No. 2.

Q. 106.—If the line is ordered to skirmish to a flank, what is done?

A. The companies will be wheeled to the re-

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quired flank. The commanding-officer, during the wheel, will name the companies to skirmish and support, and on the word "FORWARD" each captain will move his company into the position assigned to it. The file from which the extension is made, and the intervals between files, will be determined by the nature of the ground and extent to be covered.

Q. 107.—Should a battalion in line have to retire, how may skirmishers be placed to cover the retreat?

A.—They may be extended in rear of the line, and, when it has retired over them, will open fire as directed, holding their ground till ordered to retire. Supports, if necessary, may be dropped at the proper distances.

Q. 108.—In retiring, what is the most effective manner of keeping an enemy in check?

A.—The successive relief of skirmishers by supports, as described elsewhere.

Q. 109.—When skirmishers have been relieved and find that fresh supports have been sent out, what are they to do?

A.—Close, and join the battalion.

Q. 110.—What portion of the battalion must always remain with the colours (if brought out)?

A.—One company.

Q. 111.—How are changes of front in a forward direction executed by a battalion in extended order?

A.—There are no precise rules.

Changes of direction on the part of the skirmishers bring about a gradual change of front to which supports and reserve conform.[29] Skir-

[29] Thus, before starting, the skirmishers may have orders to turn the enemy, if possible, in a given direction—by gradually bringing round their right or left, as the engagement

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proceeds, merely by changing the direction.

These changes of direction should be constantly practised, as the best method of accustoming the skirmishers to conform to the movements of that portion of the line which directs.

mishers may have pushed forward in echelon of companies or half-companies to attack an enemy's flank, and changed front, as described on a small scale in A. to Q. 51; or the enemy may be retiring in a direction different from his original front or rear, necessitating a corresponding change of front to follow him up; or, in a concentric attack, there may be a partial change of front on the flanks—not affecting the centre.

Q. 112.—How are battalion changes of front best executed, in retiring?

A.—They are most advantageously effected by the supports being extended on the new alignment, while the old skirmishers continue the retreat and, as each company is relieved, form supports to the new front.

Q. 113.—Are changes of front at right angles likely to be required in action; and, if so, how are they executed?

A.—They are very rarely required—only if an enemy comes down *direct* on a flank between the skirmishers and reserve; in that case the latter, or the main body, would send out fresh skirmishers to meet him.

Q. 114.—How does a battalion in extended order act, when unexpectedly attacked by cavalry?

A.—The skirmishing companies and their respective supports will proceed as described in A. to Q. 74, 75, 76, 79,—all placing themselves in the best positions for mutual protection, so as to get the greatest amount of fire on the approaching cavalry.

The reserve will at once move towards the

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point of the line most threatened, or most easily broken by the cavalry, and form square, if necessary, with its line of fire clear of the skirmishers and supports.

Fire will be opened under the direction of the officers in charge of the different parties, wherever it is likely to be most effective.

Q. 115.—If they, or the supports, or rallying squares, are in each other's way, what is done?

A.—They are moved by their captains into echelon, if there be time.

Q. 116.—For drill purposes, if a battalion in extended order (3 companies skirmishing) is supposed to be unexpectedly attacked by cavalry all along the line of skirmishers, whose flanks are also threatened, what is done?

A.—On the bugle-sound "Prepare for Cavalry," the captain of the left skirmishers will run up into the alignment, the captain of the centre skirmishers will stand fast, and the captain of the right skirmishers will run back 20 or 30 paces, and their respective companies form rallying squares upon them.

Commanders of supports all give the word "*Double March*" without delay.

The flank supports move (with "*Half Right*, and *Half Left, Turn*" respectively) clear of the outer flank of the skirmishers' squares; they then get the word "*Front Turn*," and on the "Fire" sounding they halt, wheel half-outwards, prepare for cavalry, and open fire, as do also the skirmishers' squares. The centre support, in a similar manner, moves to the interval between the centre skirmishers and those on the

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right, and the reserve moves in rear of the corresponding interval on the left, halting on the "Fire" sounding, and forming two-deep square or oval, according to the number of companies.

If there are only two companies skirmishing, the two supports move as flank supports, and the reserve advances between the two skirmishers' squares. (*See* Pl. IV.).

Q. 117.—If the battalion has afterwards to extend again, what takes place?

A.—They take up the old alignment; the left skirmishers extending at the halt, the others on the march till in the alignment.

Q. 118.—Should it be intended to advance the skirmishers, what may the reserve and supports do?

A.—Lie down, till at a sufficient distance from the front.

Q. 119.—Should the skirmishers have closed on the supports, as described in A. to Q. 73, and the "Extend" is again ordered, what takes place?

A.—The old supports will advance and extend from the centre, or from such file as will cause them to re-occupy the former ground, and the old skirmishers will form companies in support. Or, if specially directed, or an advance is not practicable, the old supports will extend on their own ground, and the old skirmishers will retire to their proper distance as supports.

Q. 120.—If the "Assemble" sounds, or the word is given "ASSEMBLE ON THE RESERVE," how is this executed by a battalion in extended order?

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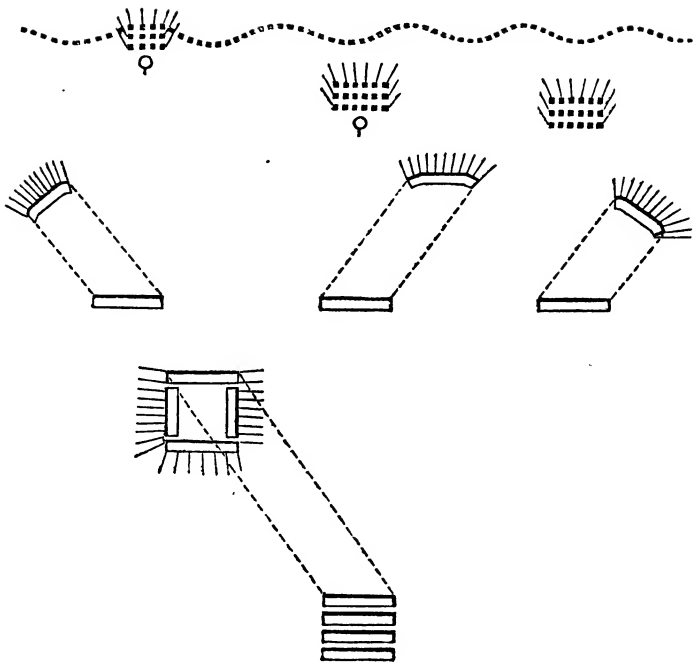
PLATE IV.



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A.—The supports—unless at open files, in which case they will run in independently—will at once form fours inwards by word of command and retire in double time, by the shortest lines, in rear of the reserve, remaining with ordered arms at "attention." When there are three supports, the centre support will form fours right, and move into column passing round the left of the reserve.

The skirmishers will run in independently on the reserve and form companies in rear, in the order in which the first detachments of companies arrive.

Skirmishers and supports may be ordered to move in quick time.

If two companies meet, they pass each other left arm to left arm.

Skirmishers and supports running in, must clear the front of the reserve as quickly as possible, so that fire may be opened, if necessary.

Q. 121.—If skirmishers have closed on the supports, and the order to "assemble" is given, what takes place?

A.—Each party composed of a support and the skirmishers who have closed on it, forms fours inwards towards the reserve, by command of its senior officer, and moves in double time, by the shortest line, to the rear of the reserve, where each company receives the words "*Halt, Front, Dress,*" from its own commander, when in its place in quarter column. The men stand with ordered arms at "attention."

If there is a centre support, it will, with its

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old skirmishers, form fours right and pass by the left of the reserve into quarter column.

Q. 122.—Should two companies meet two other companies from the opposite direction, when taking their places in quarter column in rear of the reserve, how do they act?

A.—The two from the right pass in front of those from the left.

Q. 123.—What should the supports do, in presence of cavalry, on the "Assemble" being ordered?

A.—The supports wait for the skirmishers before joining the reserve.

Q. 124.—Should any of the companies be attacked by cavalry before they can reach the reserve, how do they act?

A.—They form squares.

Q. 125.—When a battalion (or part of a battalion) covering a line, with only skirmishers and supports in front, is ordered to assemble in rear of the line, or the "Assemble" is sounded, what takes place?

A.—The whole will move to the rear of the line by the shortest directions, and clear the front as quickly as possible—the supports in fours, the skirmishers independently, all passing through the intervals between battalions.

Q. 126.—When they have passed through, where do they proceed?

A.—They move towards the commanding-officer of the battalion and form quarter column wherever he may direct, which should generally be in rear of the centre.

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If part of the battalion is already formed, they will form in rear of it.

Q. 127.—How does a flanking party move, when extended to protect the flank of a column?

A.—The skirmishers move parallel to the direction of the column in advancing or retiring, with their front outwards. If there are supports and reserve, they move in fours.

The formation is, in fact, a battalion in extended order (at such distances as may be ordered) moving direct to a flank. The leading man of the skirmishers communicates with the flank of the advanced guard. When the column is halted, the skirmishers, supports, and reserve halt and front.

Q. 128.—How would a battalion in extended order pass, advancing, a bridge, or short defile, *in contact* with an enemy? [30]

A.—The skirmishers, on reaching the margin of the river, or the beginning of the defile, will, (when the flanks cannot be reached) lie down and cover themselves, keeping up a brisk fire on the enemy, concentrated chiefly on that part of his line which commands the passage.

If his fire cannot be sufficiently silenced, the skirmishers must be reinforced and fresh supports sent out.

The supports, on approaching the bridge (or defile), will close on that support which may be opposite to it and, supported by the reserve, if any, charge and force the passage with the bayonet.

This point gained, and the reserve having

[30] In the *Field Exercise*, this evidently does not refer to a bridge or defile where the enemy has taken up a strong position, perhaps entrenched, and where the heights on either side of the defile must be taken possession of, before an advance can be made, or (in the case of a bridge) the enemy must first be dislodged by artillery fire.

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crossed the bridge, the supports will extend from their centre and open fire, the reserve maintaining possession of the bridge (or defile).

When the new skirmishers are extended, fresh supports will be sent out from the reserve and the old skirmishers will assemble on it, and the battalion again advance in extended order.

Q. 129.—How does a battalion in extended order, retiring, pass a bridge (or short defile), in contact with the enemy?

A.—The reserve passes first and takes post at the bridge-head or outlet of the defile, and then detaches parties in extended order to both flanks to line the river, or occupy the ground on either side of the defile.

The supports will close upon the one which is opposite the bridge (or defile), and in compact order halt in front of it until the skirmishers are withdrawn, to effect which quickly, they should begin inclining towards the bridge (or defile) at some distance from one or the other, and, having closed, pass at a run and form in rear of the reserve.[31]

The supports will then pass and in like manner join the reserve, and the whole will be prepared to defend the bridge or defile, as may be ordered.

The new line of skirmishers opens fire as soon as its front is clear, and, if the retreat is to be continued, new supports will be dropped from the reserve.

[31] In this case, as in advancing, it is supposed that the ground on either side of the defile is not practicable to friend or foe, and that the retreat must be through the defile.

If the new skirmishers cannot be sent so as to command the defile or the approaches to it, they must be extended at such distance in rear of the outlet as to render their fire effective on the enemy when he appears, and cover the retreat of the main body.

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A BATTALION IN BRIGADE ATTACKING A POSITION.

Q. 130.—Having regard to the rules for the movements of a battalion in extended order, as laid down in the "*Field Exercise*" and explained in the foregoing pages, how would you apply them to the attack of a battalion in brigade on an enemy's position—the battalion you command having been named to cover the advance and lead the attack?

Such matters only are to be entered on, as bear on the movements of the battalion.

Brigadier reconnoitres.

A.—1. The brigadier, having formed up his brigade under cover and unseen by the enemy (if possible), proceeds, accompanied by me, to reconnoitre his position, ascertaining (if that is not already done by the advanced guard) where he is most strongly posted and supported, and decides on the point of attack and best line of advance—selecting for that purpose ground affording cover, under protection of which the position may be approached with the least loss.

Brigadier instructs.

2. He then assembles the commanding-officers, and describes the ground, if well known, or with the aid of a map—the position of the enemy's infantry, cavalry, and artillery, as far as has been ascertained or inferred from observation—the dangers to be apprehended and how they will be best avoided—the position of our

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own troops on either side (if any) and the assistance to be derived from them.

[32] This plan of operations will include the measures to be adopted for supporting us, if checked on the flanks or other part of the line, as also for covering our retreat if necessary.

He communicates the general objects in view and the general plan of operations proposed [32] for its attainment, and the part assigned in these operations to my battalion.

He will point out unmistakeably the line the battalion is to take up preparatory to advancing to the attack, should such advance not be straight to the front of the present position; and will tell us whether to pursue, or only hold the position if attack succeeds.

Time being also an important element, it must be stated whether the dislodgement of the enemy is emergent or admits of a more cautious advance.

The brigadier directs how many companies are to cover the advance in the first instance, taking care not to extend more companies than absolutely necessary,—so that there may be sufficient men in support and reserve to prolong the line afterwards, or furnish reinforcements where most needed.

Battalion-commander.

3. I am now left to carry out my instructions. I repeat what the brigadier has said, and name the companies to skirmish and support, and the company of direction, showing them how the line indicated by the brigadier preparatory to attack can be best taken up, as regards safety, and without unnecessary disclosures to the enemy.

I then order them out to cover the brigade, and they take up the position assigned to them, halting there for such time (if available) as may be necessary to get the line into perfect order.

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The reserve (if one be required from the battalion) is moved into its proper place.

After pointing out to the captains the line of attack, and giving instructions to the company of direction accordingly, I order the advance, placing myself where I can best watch the operations, and near my reserve, in order to direct its movements in aid of the skirmishers.

Skirmishers to have a general object in view in all their movements.

4. The skirmishers, under the direction of their officers, will bear the general object steadily in view and must act in accordance therewith, though the plan of their proposed operations may be subject to certain modifications according to subsequent movements of the enemy and the amount of resistance encountered at certain points.

Skirmishers' first advance.

5. The skirmishers advance without firing, in a good general line, in quick time, whether under cover or otherwise, until the enemy's fire begins to tell and it may be necessary to advance firing, according to the most suitable methods, which have been described.

But it must be recollected that it is well worth the sacrifice of a few men to get near the enemy's position in good order and without fatigue, and that therefore the general line should be brought up unbroken, without firing, as far as circumstances admit, and even *after* firing has commenced.

The amount of firing must be strictly regulated by the object to be attained by each fractional part of the line at each successive stage of the attack.

Skirmishers under effective fire.

6. When the skirmishers come under the *really effective fire* of the enemy, everything

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will depend on the manner in which the companies, half-companies, sections, or other fractional parts cover each other's advance. Parts of the line will generally be able to dash forward to some sort of cover—protected by the fire of other parts, which then advance in their turn—perhaps only into the front alignment, perhaps beyond.

The first thing an officer has to ask himself, when his own men cannot get at the enemy, is "Can I help others to do so?"

All this has been entered into before, but cannot be too often repeated.

The skirmishers, in their first rushes or movements from one position to another, will cover as much ground as possible—these rushes becoming shorter and shorter, and the firing more intense, as the attack proceeds.

Every endeavour should be made to get a footing on a flank of the enemy's position and, by feints in other directions, to draw his supports and reserves away from whatever may be the real point of attack.

It must be remembered that the great advantage of the attacking party over the defenders is, that while the latter must be prepared all along their line, the former can choose any point of attack and there endeavour to surprise and overwhelm the enemy with superior numbers.

A monotonous and uniform advance of a line of skirmishers with their supports, except with a greatly superior force, is not likely to effect much.

Once establish yourself in sufficient numbers

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on any one point in the enemy's general line, so as to enfilade his position, and he must retire.

But when the attack is thus made by one part of the skirmishers and its supports,[33] those on either side should take care not to advance before success is ensured—so as to cover the retreat if necessary, or guard against a counter attack on the part of the enemy.

Skirmishers will find, as a rule, that they cannot "advance firing" on open ground nearer than 150 yards from the enemy, and then he must be charged at a run at such point or points as opportunity offers, bayonets having been fixed by the attacking party under cover, or when lying down during the previous advance.[34]

7. A flank attack is made by the battalion either by prolonging the skirmishing line in the required direction, or by detaching a party to work round the enemy, or by a direct attack on his flank with superior forces carefully brought up at the right moment.

When a support prolongs the line for the above purpose, it should be extended (out of fire) in rear of the flank and, if possible, at an angle to the enemy's position, and then move up rapidly, rake his line, and charge.

A single battalion covering the advance can seldom afford to weaken its line by a considerable prolongation, or by detaching any but small parties to operate on the enemy's flank.

More extended flank movements are executed by parties detached from the remainder of the brigade, whilst the battalion is holding the enemy at bay in front.

[33] If it can be brought up close to the skirmishing line under cover, the support (in close order or with extended files) may make the attack,—passing over the skirmishers, who keep up their fire to the last moment and then act as new supports.

But this is quite exceptional: — the nearly invariable rule is that the skirmishers make the final assault, and the supports follow in good order, ready to complete any success or cover a retreat, if the latter be *totally unavoidable*.

[34] The common practice of fixing bayonets when in motion or standing and in the act of charging would be rather a hazardous proceeding at close quarters—I do not find such practice borne out by the *Field Exercise*.

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Full development should not be given to a flank attack till near the enemy, or when hidden by the ground—so as to afford him no time to meet it, unless the object be to induce him to retire from his position (or part of it) by a mere *demonstration* on his flank.

8. The officers with the line of skirmishers must carefully watch the movements and pass all information rapidly down the line, that all may be prepared to co-operate and be ready for a general advance the moment the opportunity offers, and they see by the slackening of the enemy's fire and other indications that his position is no longer tenable or that he is evidently thinking of beating a retreat.

[35] Skirmishers not to pursue, as a rule, unless specially ordered.

9. Once in the position, the enemy should be followed by a rapid, steady, independent firing from the skirmishers, until fresh troops have come up to pursue if necessary.[35]

The battalion then assembles, and moves as ordered by the brigadier.

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OUTPOST DUTY.

Q. 1.—What two descriptions of Piquets are there?

A.—Inlying and Outlying.

Q. 2.—What are the duties of the inlying piquet?

A.—To remain in camp, either fully accoutred, or with arm and accoutrements within reach, ready to turn out at a moment's notice.

Q. 3.—What is the object of outlying piquets?

A.—1. To ensure the repose of the main body.

2. To guard it against being surprised by the enemy, and delay him as long as possible when attacking.

3. To obtain information of the position and proceedings of the enemy, and prevent him from reconnoitering the position covered by the piquet.

Q. 4.—How are these objects attained?

A.—1. By guarding against unnecessary firing (especially at night) on the part of the sentries, or other false alarms calculated to disturb the main body, perhaps greatly fatigued and requiring rest to fit it for the work to follow.

2. By placing a piquet at such distance from the main body as to avoid risk of being cut off, and in such a strong defensive position as either to be able to hold the ground, or to avoid being beaten back on the main body till it is fully prepared to meet the attack.

3. By patrolling as far as possible towards the enemy, and

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posting the line of sentries in such a manner that nothing approaching can escape detection.

Q. 5.—What is the first duty before marching off a piquet; and how should a piquet be marched out to occupy ground for the first time?

A.—Ammunition will be examined, and special instructions asked for from the field officer of the day.

The piquet is marched off as an advanced guard, preceded by feelers, or by a line of skirmishers, as the nature of the ground requires.

Q. 6.—What have the officer in command, and those under him, to observe on the march?

A.—The best line of retreat, and the strongest positions for defence, in case of being beaten back on the main body. The men must note such land-marks as will enable them to recognise the road if required to carry messages back.

Q. 7.—When arrived at a position selected for the post, what is the first duty of the commander?

A.—To see to the safety of the piquet, and ascertain if there be any enemy in the neighbourhood.

Q. 8.—How is this to be done?

A.—If the line of skirmishers has not already passed over and examined the ground, this is now to be done by means of detached parties who will search every place which may conceal an enemy, and obtain as good a view as they can, from high ground, tops of buildings and trees, &c. Sentries are thrown out to the front and flanks.

Q. 9.—When the safety of the piquet from surprise is ensured, what is the next step?

A.—It is told off into three reliefs, after first selecting the examining party and men for the small reconnoitering patroles, who are not to be included in the reliefs.

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Q. 10.—What will be the strength of the examining party and reconnoitering patroles?

A.—Examining party, one serjeant and four privates. Patroles, from two to three men each, generally with a n.-c. officer, but without if thoroughly to be depended on.

Q. 11.—What does the commander do next?

A.—He leaves the main body of the piquet under arms, if there is the slightest danger; and, taking the first relief with him, posts his sentries from right to left and exceptionally from left to right, in communication with the sentries of the other piquets on either flank,—taking care in doing so, if possible, not to be seen by the enemy; he also takes with him the examining party and posts it on some convenient thoroughfare near the piquet.

Q. 12.—In posting the sentries, how is delay avoided?

A.—The officer should quickly drop the line of sentries in the position most generally advantageous, and then return along the line and correct any little error there may be in the position of individual sentries.*

The line of sentries should be so placed as to prevent the position of the main body and outposts from being overlooked by the enemy in front, and to keep him under fire for a considerable distance, if he attacks.

Q. 13.—What should the commander do in the case of any commanding spots in front, from which the position is overlooked and which cannot be embraced within the line of sentries?

A.—He should have them occupied by small detached parties, if such can be spared and are not liable to be cut off by the enemy; but he must be careful not to weaken the main body of the piquet too much.

Q. 14.—What must he be careful about, as regards the extent of ground held by the line of sentries?

* This is important, as much time is wasted if the officer endeavours to place every sentry, in the first instance, exactly where he should be.

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A.—That it is of no greater extent than he is able to defend with his piquet.

Q. 15.—After he has posted his line of sentries, what is the next step?

A.—To return to his piquet, and post it.

Q. 16.—In what manner as regards the sentries?

A.—In such manner that they can see, and be seen by, the piquet, that they can be easily supported in case of attack, and be freely communicated with; and that the lines of retreat and advance are open.

Q. 17.—What should be the distance of the piquet from the line of sentries?

A.—Such that, if the latter is attacked, the piquet will have ample time to prepare: as a rule, the distance should not be less than 300 yards or more than 400 yards.

Q. 18.—What is done next?

A.—If the ground cannot easily be overlooked by the sentries, the commander sends out reconnoitering parties to examine it thoroughly, see that no enemy lies concealed, and pick up information from the people of the country.

Q. 19.—After that?

A.—He visits with an escort the neighbouring piquets, informs them of his position and lines of communication and the strong and weak points, obtains corresponding information from them, and arranges plans for mutual assistance in case of attack or defence, endeavouring to anticipate all possible eventualities.

Q. 20.—What instructions does the commander leave with his piquet, previous to visiting the adjoining piquets?

A.—He mentions where he is going, his probable time of absence, and what is to be done in the meantime in case of attack, as far as he can anticipate the circumstances. He must point out clearly to the next in command (should he not be already acquainted with it) the position of the line of sentries.

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Q. 21.—On his return, what should he do?

A.—Take every means to strengthen the position by the construction of abattis or other works, as may be most suitable under the circumstances and with the means at hand.

Sentries by Day.

Q. 22.—Are sentries double or single: do they fix or unfix bayonets; and do they stand, kneel, or lie down?

A.—Double, as a rule. They unfix bayonets and stand under cover, or, should there be no cover for them standing, they kneel. They should lie down only when it is unavoidable, as in that position they are not so alert, and sleep is likely to overpower them.

Q. 23.—Why are sentries double?

A.—For mutual support in sudden danger, and in order that one man may carry a message, if necessary, to the piquet, and pass strangers on to the next post.

Q. 24.—When may sentries be single?

A.—When the line is extended and each post has its own relief close in rear; but this is not advisable as regards the whole line of sentries, as there would be no men left in support ready to be directed to any part of the line in case of attack.

Q. 25.—Where, however, may these reliefs be posted to advantage?

A.—In rear of the sentries on either flank.

Q. 26.—Why?

A.—Because in certain cases (afterwards explained) parties may have to be placed in support of the flanks, and they can thus answer two purposes.

Q. 27.—On what sort of ground should the flank rest, if possible, and why?

A.—On impassable ground, such as bogs, steep inclines, &c.,

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so that the flanks cannot be easily turned. If the flanks are exposed, then small parties in support should be posted in rear.

Q. 28.—Why do the sentries not fix bayonets by day?

A.—Lest the bayonets should glitter and disclose their position.

Q. 29.—How many sentries should be thrown out by day?

A.—As few as possible—just sufficient to watch all the ground in front and the approaches, and to communicate with and see each other, and no more.

Q. 30.—On what sort of ground, if obtainable, should they be posted in the day time?

A.—On high ground; but in any case on ground from which they can obtain the most extended view, and which can easily be defended.

Q. 31.—What should a sentry not be posted near; what should there be in his immediate front, and what in his rear?

A.—He should not be posted near any cover from which a sudden rush can be made on him by an enemy. There should be, if possible, at least 200 or 300 yards of open ground in his front, crossing which an enemy would be fully exposed to his fire; and his line of retreat on the piquet must be open.

Q. 32.—In a very enclosed and flat country, how should the line of sentries be placed?

A.—Along some hedgerows or embankment, or other cover, with open fields in front, and roads communicating with the piquet in rear. In such a country, where probably the sentries cannot be seen from the piquet, connecting sentries (single) must be posted on the road to communicate with the piquet.

Q. 33.—If occupying a large extent of wood, how should the sentries be placed?

A.—On the outskirts nearest the enemy, or—if he has partly possession—in rear of clearances, which (if not there already) should, if practicable, be made.

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Q. 34.—What obstacles would be desirable in such circumstances, and where should they be placed?

A.—Abattis,—which, like other obstacles in all cases, should be placed from 150 to 200 yards in front of the position, so as to detain an enemy under point-blank range.

Q. 35.—What has to be made known to every sentry by the officer commanding the piquet?

A.—1. The number of his post.

2. The front, or direction whence the enemy may be expected.

3. The position of the piquet, and the nearest way to it.

4. The position of the neighbouring sentries.

5. His own line of retreat in case of attack.

6. The names of the various villages, woods and buildings, streams, heights and other land-marks, and also where the roads lead to.

Q. 36.—Why should the last-mentioned information be given to the sentry?

A.—That he may the more easily and intelligibly convey messages regarding the enemy's movements.

Q. 37.—You say the sentries should be under cover by day:—what sort of cover do you mean?

A.—Such cover as will hide them without interfering in the least with their seeing the whole of the ground, or with a free use of their arms.

Q. 38.—What do you understand by sentries being alert on their post?

A.—That they are never to remove their eyes from off the ground they are to watch, and to suspect an enemy in everyone that approaches until fully satisfied who he is,—that they are in no way to be disturbed in their vigilance by the presence of superiors and others of their own party, or allow their thoughts to stray from their immediate duties; and that they are keenly alive to every sign which may denote the presence of an enemy:—

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in fact, that every sentry exercises all his faculties to obtain information, and fully realizes that the safety of the whole force may depend on his conduct, and the care with which he acquaints the commander of the piquet with every observation and circumstance of consequence.

Q. 39.—What signs may denote the approach of an enemy, and how can a sentry best hear approaching sounds?

A.—Clouds of dust observable in the distance without natural causes, the glitter of arms, unusual commotion and disturbance amongst cattle, wild birds, and animals, as if scared by parties of men moving in their direction, and other significant and suspicious signs, may lead to the discovery of an unknown enemy or of the movement of a known one.

By applying the ear to the ground the approach of cavalry and artillery and large bodies of infantry may be detected, more particularly at night, especially on ground that carries the sound well.

Q. 40.—What should a sentry do when he believes the enemy to be advancing to the attack?

A.—Give the alarm and hold his ground, unless he has orders to retire on another position in rear of the line of sentries, which is to be the first defensive position of the piquet.

Q. 41.—How does he give the alarm?

A.—As a rule he fires shots rapidly in succession without reference to distance, and the other sentries do the same, that not only the piquet but the main body may know that the attack is being made, and prepare for it.

Q. 42.—May there be exceptions to this rule?

A.—Only if special instructions are given, in case it may be desirable to allow the enemy to approach, under the illusion that he is not perceived, for the purpose of more effectually frustrating his designs. But even then the sentry must fire, if he does not become aware of the attack in sufficient time to give

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ample warning to the piquet, so that the piquet may be able to warn the main body.

Q. 43.—How do the sentries communicate intelligence?

A.—By preconcerted signals, or by one man carrying messages to the piquet whilst the other remains on his post.

Q. 44.—Does a single shot from a sentry necessarily alarm the main body or piquet?

A.—It should not alarm the main body; but the piquet stands to its arms at once and sends a party to where the shot has been fired, to ascertain the cause and to act according to circumstances.

Q. 45.—How do sentries challenge?

A.—In the day time they merely halt the party or person approaching and, if satisfied that there is nothing to apprehend, pass them on along the line to the examining party.

Q. 46.—How many people may a sentry allow to approach him at the same time?

A.—Not more than one.

Q. 47.—Where will the party be halted; and how far may the spokesman advance?

A.—They will be halted at a considerable distance and before they get on to any ground overlooking the position—in fact, as a rule, directly they come within reach of the sentry's voice. The person deputed to answer for them must also on no account be allowed to approach so as to see any part of the position, but must be halted directly he comes within communicating distance, one man of the double sentry going forward, if necessary, to meet him.

Q. 48.—If the party refuse to halt or answer, what does the sentry do?

A.—He fires at them.

Q. 49.—May sentries permit persons to pass through the line of sentries anywhere between the posts?

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A.—No, they usually direct them to pass in front of the line and at such distance as not to see the position till they come to the post in rear of which the examining party is stationed; that party will be then summoned by the sentry on that post.

Q. 50.—How may a person be passed on, if he cannot be easily directed and kept in view?

A.—By the sentry accompanying him at a proper distance on the inner flank to the next post, from which he will be again passed on in the same manner till he reaches the examining party. If another stranger makes his appearance during the absence of one of the double sentries, he must be halted until the sentry returns.

Q. 51.—How is a flag of truce treated?

A.—It is passed on in the same way to the examining party.

Q. 52.—If a sentry is attacked and forced to retire, how does he do so?

A.—He should not retire straight on the piquet, but in a zigzag direction, so as to mislead the enemy.

Q. 53.—What do the other sentries do?

A.—They retire also in a general line, unless there is no danger of being cut off, and they can operate with advantage on the flank of the approaching enemy.

Q. 54.—What compliments do piquet sentries pay?

A.—None.

Q. 55.—May sentries permit persons belonging to their own party to pass through the line from the rear?

A.—No, excepting those who have been named to them by the commander as authorised to pass.

Q. 56.—If a man deserts from the piquet, what must be done?

A.—Parole and countersign must be changed, and new ones given to the sentries; and the neighbouring piquets must be informed.

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Q. 57.—Do sentries fire at the enemy's sentries, or patrols or small parties when not reconnoitering or otherwise molesting the troops?

A.—No.

Q. 58.—Why?

A.—Because such petty warfare does no good and only leads to retaliation and illwill between advanced posts, which is especially to be avoided in civilised war.

Sentries by Night.

Q. 59.—How are the sentries posted by night, and in foggy weather?

A.—They are withdrawn if necessary from the position they occupied by day, and posted so that they can see an approaching enemy against the horizon or sky-line. It is more necessary at night, on level ground, that the position should be open and clear of cover, to enable the sentries to see.

Q. 60.—It is said that the sentries, if on high ground, are withdrawn to the foot of such elevation—is this quite correct in all circumstances?

A.—No; they should be withdrawn only so far from the brow as to see against the sky-line—but not so as to give the enemy possession of the heights, unless the first line of defence upon which the sentries have to fall back is in rear.

Q. 61.—Are sentries more numerous at night than in the day time?

A.—Much more numerous: they are posted so closely as to enable them to patrol easily towards each other, and prevent anyone passing between them unperceived.

Q. 62.—How do they patrol?

A.—One man of the double sentry patrols to the right till he meets the next sentry, and then returns to his post, patrolling in

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a circular direction to the front. The other man remains at his post, and patrols in his turn when his comrade returns.

Q. 63.—How does a sentry at night recognise his way to the piquet, or his line of retreat?

A.—By having previously noted conspicuous objects in the required direction, which he will have to pass in rotation; or he may place a stick on forked stakes in the direction.

Q. 64.—Do sentries fix, or unfix, bayonets at night?

A.—They fix.

Q. 65.—What should each sentry be told, in order to recognize friend or enemy?

A.—Parole and countersign, and certain signals and pass-words agreed upon; also certain questions to ask which no enemy is likely to be able to answer.

Q. 66.—Should these signals and pass-words be frequently changed?

A.—Yes, at every relief.

Q. 67.—How do sentries challenge at night?

A.—The sentry nearest the approaching party, directly he hears or sees it, calls out "Halt. Who comes there?" at such distance that no rush can be made on him. His comrade runs up to his support, and both bring their rifles to the charge.

Q. 68.—If the approaching party answers "Friend," what does the sentry do?

A.—He says "Stand friend. Advance one and give the Countersign," but does not allow him to advance too close.

Q. 69.—If a party of the piquet, what then?

A.—It is allowed to proceed on the word from the sentry "Pass friend."

Q. 70.—If strangers?

A.—They are passed on to the examining party.

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Examining Party.

Q. 71.—For what purpose is an examining party required?

A.—It is required for the purpose of examining all strangers wishing to pass through the chain of sentries, parties in charge of flags of truce, deserters from the enemy, &c., &c.

Q. 72.—Where is it posted?

A.—As before stated, on some central thoroughfare near and leading to the piquet, and within call from one of the sentries in the chain, posted on or close to the road.

Q. 73.—Why is an examining party essential?

A.—Because, not only might it become a source of danger to allow strangers to pass the line of sentries at all points, but it is hardly to be expected that each sentry is competent to know and decide who should, and who should not, be allowed to pass the chain.

Q. 74.—Where are persons wishing to pass examined by the examining party?

A.—Where they have been halted by the sentry in front, so that they may not overlook the position.

Q. 75.—How does the n.-c. officer in command of the examining party proceed?

A.—He goes up to the sentry with his party, places the men under cover, makes ready his rifle, calls out "Advance one," and halts the person advancing within a few steps.

He then asks him who he is, his reason for wishing to pass, where he comes from and where he is going to; and, if possible, tests the correctness of his answers (an easy matter should he pretend to be a friend and known to the troops).

Q. 76.—What does the commander of the examining party do next?

A.—If satisfied that there is no objection to passing the

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person or persons through the line, he passes them at once; but if he is still suspicious, or uncertain whether his instructions meet the case, he sends for the commander of the piquet to decide, or has the person taken to him, blindfolded, for his decision.

Q. 77.—How is a flag of truce from the enemy treated?

A.—The bearers are halted in a similar manner, but they will invariably be examined by the commander of the piquet, who will be summoned for the purpose.

Q. 78.—What does he do?

A.—He either detains the flag of truce till he has reported to the field-officer of the day, or forwards the bearers blindfolded to camp under an escort, according to his instructions. If a letter or parcel be delivered a receipt is given, and the party with the flag of truce is ordered to retire at once, without any of the piquet being allowed to hold any conversation with it.

Q. 79.—What does the examining party do with deserters from the enemy?

A.—Their arms have to be laid down, and they are taken to the piquet, as many at a time as is consistent with safety; from the piquet they are passed on to the rear.

Sentry over the Arms.

Q. 80.—What are the duties of the sentry over the arms?

A.—Not only to guard the arms, but (if possible) to watch the chain of sentries, communicate to the commander all signals from them, and where shots proceed from, or other circumstances of consequence. He also halts and challenges all persons approaching, and apprises his commander, unless they belong to the piquet.

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Relief of Piquet and Sentries.

Q. 81.—When should the piquet be relieved; and why?

A.—At daybreak; because the enemy is most likely to attack at that time, and the relief acts in that case as a reinforcement.

Q. 82.—What is the duty of the relieving officer?

A.—To make himself acquainted with the exact position of the piquet and line of sentries he is to relieve, and the position of the enemy and his outposts—their strength and all other circumstances necessary to realize the situation. As regards the rest of his duties when posting the piquet, they are the same as those of the officer he relieves. The latter accompanies the relieving officer when the sentries are being relieved, points out the reasons for the selection of their respective posts, and repeats the orders given to them; he also communicates all observations of importance of what has taken place in the direction of the enemy.

Q. 83.—If the officer with the piquet that is relieved hears firing before he reaches the camp, what does he do?

A.—He returns to re-inforce and assist the piquet he relieved.

Q. 84.—How often are sentries relieved?

A.—Every two hours by day; every hour by night.

Q. 85.—How does the relief proceed along the line of sentries?

A.—In rear.

Q. 86.—How are the men detailed for the different posts?

A.—Each post has three men allotted to it, to relieve each other—that a man may become acquainted with the post, and not be put on another of which he knows nothing.

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Patroles.

Q. 87.—For the purposes of more clearly defining the duties of patroles, how may such patroles be classified?

A.—

Class I. from Piquet.
- *a.* Patroles along the lines of sentries, called "Visiting patroles."
- *b.* Patroles to the neighbouring piquets, called "Connecting patroles."
- *c.* Patroles in the direction of the enemy, called "Sly reconnoitering patroles."

Class II. from Reserve.
- *a.* Reconnoitering patroles in force.
- *b.* Pursuing patroles.
- *c.* Patroles to catch prisoners.

Q. 88.—What are the duties of the visiting patroles?

A.—They have to ensure the vigilance of the sentries, and prevent an enemy stealing up to them unperceived. They move along the front of the line and search all places within a few hundred yards where an enemy might be concealed, immediately giving the alarm should any hostile party be discerned in dangerous proximity. They will occasionally stand and listen. They move stealthily in front of the sentries, and wait to see if they are observed by them, in order to prove their vigilance.

Should they meet strangers, they challenge in the same manner as sentries and conduct them to the nearest post to be passed on to the examining party in the usual manner. Visiting patroles go out once between every relief at night.

Q. 89.—What is the duty of the connecting patroles?

A.—To visit the neighbouring piquets, gain from them all the information they can, and see that the connection is perfectly kept up.

Q. 90.—What are the duties of the sly reconnoitering patroles?

A.—To proceed frequently (as a rule once between each relief) towards the enemy's lines, moving with the greatest caution and getting near enough to him to find out all about his movements,

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where his piquets are, and even (if possible) to get hold of his watchword. If they come across his patroles, they watch them, follow them up, or retire unobserved to report, according to circumstances or apprehended danger, and only fire if they are likely to be overtaken and made prisoners. While concealing themselves as much as possible, they must always bear in mind that this is subservient to the main object of obtaining the information they are sent to obtain—more especially as to the enemy's position and movements. It is also highly important that sly patroles should satisfy themselves as to the vigilance of the enemy's piquets and sentries, as thereupon may greatly depend the success or failure of any intended attack on his position.

Q. 91.—What are the reconnoitering patroles in force from the reserve intended for?

A.—For more effectually reconnoitering than the small patroles—owing to the enemy's vigilance, and the number of his small parties in the vicinity, or to the great distance of his position—may have been able to do. The larger patrole can drive away these small parties of the enemy, and also, if necessary, beat in a portion of his piquets or chain of sentries, and thereby obtain a view of his position.

They are especially needed just about daybreak to report, and, if necessary, oppose an enemy advancing to the attack—also to patrol the front of a line of sentries when first posted in a close or wooded country which may conceal hostile forces.

These patroles move as advanced guards and take all the same precautions as other patroles, where secrecy and concealment are necessary.

When reconnoitering a considerable extent of ground, they should have strong flanking patroles—not only for their own protection, but for more rapid reconnoitering. Small parties can also be dropped or sent out to occupy commanding points of observation, from which to see and report to the patrole all that goes on.

Such parties must be informed when they are to rejoin the patrole.

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Q. 92.—What are pursuing patroles intended for?

A.—On the retreat of an enemy being reported, it is generally advisable for these patroles to be sent from the reserve of the piquets to follow cautiously in his track—above all things keeping him in sight, and ascertaining what forces he may have detached on the march and in what direction the main body has gone. These patroles must be careful not to fall into an ambuscade, and should march in detachments at intervals. All movements should be carefully reported, especially any new position the enemy may take up—in which case, after being reconnoitered, the patrole returns. These pursuing patroles must always be of considerable strength, larger or smaller according to the strength of the enemy and the distance at which the patrole is supported. A small mounted force should accompany them.

Q. 93.—What are the duties of the patrole as to catching prisoners, and how do they proceed?

A.—The usual direction of the enemy's patroles having been ascertained, these parties are sent out to lie in ambush in his path, and after he has passed (not before) they intercept his retreat, fall upon him without firing, if it can be avoided, and make as many prisoners as possible—but do not pursue the men who escape. The intention of these patroles is not to kill or take prisoners as many of the enemy as possible, which might lead to a system of petty warfare elsewhere deprecated—but to secure a few prisoners for the purpose of obtaining information from them. If one of these patroles is successful, the object will probably be attained, and no more be required until a change of circumstances has again rendered it desirable.

Q. 94.—What has to be observed by all patroles, to ensure efficiency and success?

A.—The greatest silence. Anything that has to be said must be said in a whisper.

Q. 95.—What men are selected for patrolling—especially for the small patrols?

A.—Men of the greatest activity and intelligence, and good shots.

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The Piquet.

Q. 96.—What have infantry piquets attached to them, for the purpose of communicating rapidly with the reserve and main body?

A.—A couple of mounted orderlies.

Q. 97.—What has to be observed with regard to arms and equipment?

A.—The piquet piles arms by reliefs, with intervals between*: valises are taken off, but carefully arranged within reach, so that they can be speedily put on, even in the dark, without confusion.

Q. 98.—In what position should the piquet be placed, otherwise than has before been answered, with reference to the line of sentries?

A.—In as sheltered a place as possible—hidden from the enemy, but with a good look out, and near a good road or open thoroughfare.

Q. 99.—What is done at night, as regards the position occupied by day?

A.—It is changed, in case the enemy may have become aware of it.

Q. 100.—May a piquet shut itself up in any house or enclosure?

A.—No.

Q. 101.—When should the piquet rest and sleep?

A.—As much as possible during the day time, for at night all must be on the alert, or only a small portion be allowed to sleep at a time.

Q. 102.—If fires are needed, where are they placed?

A.—In front or in a hollow, or otherwise sheltered from the view of the enemy—but they should only be allowed when absolutely necessary.

* This is in order that, when one relief has to fall in, the others are not necessarily awakened at the same time.

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Q. 103.—When should piquets be under arms in the morning?

A.—An hour before day-break, and remain so until all chance of an attack by the enemy is over.

Q. 104.—What should the piquet be cautioned against?

A.—Making any noise or conversing in a loud tone, or even conversing at all beyond what is absolutely necessary, as all this—besides, perhaps disclosing the position of the piquet to the enemy—has a tendency to render the men less vigilant. The men should also be cautioned against straying away from the piquet, or absenting themselves without leave.

Q. 105.—What is to be observed in placing obstacles to an enemy's approach on the roads, or other thoroughfares?

A.—That they can be easily removed, so as to cause no obstruction to the advance of the main body, especially the cavalry and artillery.

Q. 106.—What is to be observed as regards cooking the men's meals?

A.—They should take their dinners cooked, so as to render no fire necessary.

Q. 107.—Do outlying piquets pay compliments?

A.—No:—when approached by a general officer, the field-officer of the day, or any armed party, the piquet will fall in and stand to its arms.

Duties of the Officer commanding the Piquet.

Q. 108.—What are the duties of the commander of the piquet during his tour of duty, other than have been particularised before when posting the piquet?

A.—He must frequently go forward to the chain of sentries, view the ground in front, and personally satisfy himself of any movements or changes of position on the part of the enemy. He must frequently accompany the visiting patroles at night and keep the officer commanding the outposts well informed of all

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that transpires, and be ready to answer all questions which may be put by superior officers on duty visiting his post.

Q. 109.—What is he to do with prisoners?

A.—Pass them on to the reserve, with a report as to how and where they were secured, and their answers to his enquiries, in order that their consistency and truthfulness may be put to the test if they are subsequently examined by other authority.

Q. 110.—What has he to do with regard to the orders for the guidance of his sentries and patroles?

A.—He should personally satisfy himself that they understand their orders, by making them repeat them.

Q. 111.—With what has he to acquaint those under his command?

A.—With the general object in view, and the plan of operation in case the piquet is attacked.

Q. 112.—What is it specially necessary to let the chain of sentries know, in case they are attacked?

A.—Whether they are occupying the position chosen for the first line of defence. If not, and it is in rear, it must be clearly pointed out to them.

Q. 113.—What has the commander to do, when the piquet falls in an hour before day?

A.—Without waiting for any large reconnoitering patroles from the reserve, he sends out several of his own sly patroles to thoroughly search the ground in front of the sentries for any concealed or approaching enemy. About dawn he orders the sentries to resume the same position as on the previous day, and reports in writing to the commander of the outposts whether all's well or otherwise.

Duties of the Piquet and its Commander, in case of attack by the Enemy.

Q. 114.—What is the first thing to be done by the commander when attacked?

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A.—Directly a shot is heard from any sentries, where they cannot be seen, a patrole is sent in that direction, both as a support, if necessary, and to bring or send back intelligence; and the piquet at once falls in.

Q. 115.—If an attack is being made, and the commander has ample notice, what does he do?

A.—He at once communicates the intelligence to the reserve and neighbouring piquets, adding such particulars as he is able to give regarding the approximate numbers of the attacking force, their direction, what assistance (if any) he requires, and how it can be best rendered. He then proceeds with his piquet to the point attacked, throwing out a sufficient number of skirmishers during his advance to reinforce the chain of sentries in that direction, without showing themselves to the enemy or going beyond the chain. He then makes his dispositions for defence, taking the enemy in flank unawares, if possible, with a portion of the piquet.

Q. 116.—If attacked suddenly in force, and apparently along the whole front of his position, and the sentries are being beaten back?

A.—He at once reports the circumstances to the reserve and advances in skirmishing order (keeping his support well in hand), and takes up a position (previously fixed on for such emergency and communicated to the sentries) in rear of the chain, which then retires on that position, contesting the ground inch by inch, and delaying by every possible means the advance of the enemy.

Q. 117.—If the attack proves to be made by a weaker party of the enemy, what does the commander do?

A.—Drives him back as quickly and quietly as possible, using no more powder than necessary, as much firing alarms the camp.

Q. 118.—If attacked by a stronger party?

A.—An incessant fire is kept up and the best possible stand is made; and as the piquet knows the ground well, and has rendered the position stronger by artificial means, and the reserves

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are close at hand, it has a great advantage over the enemy; this cannot be too strongly impressed on the men previously, in order to give them perfect confidence and prevent those sudden panics to which outposts are liable.

Q. 119.—If forced to retire, how is it to be done?

A.—As slowly and obstinately as possible, falling back, stage by stage, on positions previously selected in the direction of the outer flank of the reserve.

Q. 120.—When a neighbouring piquet is attacked, what is done?

A.—If evidently attacked in force, the piquet is moved in the direction of its neighbour (provided its own front is not in danger) in order to afford assistance as circumstances require: a mounted orderly, or the connecting patrole, is sent at the same time to bring intelligence, and the line of sentries retires in a general line with the sentries of the piquet attacked. A report of the piquet having left its position and its direction, is sent to the reserve.

Q. 121.—When an attacking enemy is driven back, does the piquet pursue?

A.—Not without special orders—though a small patrole may be sent to follow him to obtain intelligenee of his movements. The main body of the piquet and the chain of sentries resume their original positions.

Q. 122.—What is understood by mutual support, when piquets are attacked and are forced to retire?

A.—The piquets retiring alternately with each other, those in a strong position holding the enemy in check until the piquet on either flank make good their retreat, and have in their turn selected positions to cover the retreat of those nearest the enemy.

Q. 123.—When, only, is a piquet justified in retiring?

A.—When its flanks are turned, and there is danger of being cut off.

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Q. 124.—Even in that case, must not a piquet sometimes hold its ground?

A.—Yes—if there has not been time for the main body to prepare, and there is a chance of its being surprised: the piquet must then sacrifice itself, if necessary, in order to detain the enemy.

Q. 125.—Where is a night attack most likely to be made by the enemy?

A.—On open ground, or along roads.

Q. 126.—In what formation?

A.—In close order, as skirmishers cannot move at night.

Q. 127.—How is the attack best met?

A.—By the piquet remaining in ambush on the line of the enemy's advance, and the sentries retiring firing before him, and luring him on to the spot from which he is then fired at at a very short range, and charged with the bayonet. The moment the relieving and other detached parties not immediately opposed to the enemy become aware of the attack, they rejoin the piquet.

Reserves.

Q. 128.—Where should the reserves be posted?

A.—On the main avenues or lines of direction along which an enemy can approach the main body: they should have free communication with the piquets to their front and flanks, and with each other. Their distance from the line of piquets must be such that they can easily support them without danger of being surprised in case the piquets are driven back suddenly. As a rule, the distance should be about 600 yards.

Q. 129.—What are their duties?

A.—To pass on to the main body all information received from the piquets—to support the piquet when necessary—send out patroles as already described—and select strong defensive positions in rear of the line of piquets, at which to keep an advancing enemy in check.

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